

HR QUARTERLY BULLETIN

SPRING 2023

Driving change and shaping the future



LEGAL UPDATES

- Employees that are working in different Provinces.
- Occupational Health and Safety considerations for remote workers.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- Encouraging social connections and promoting a workplace with psychological health and safety in place.
- Day of Mourning, April 28, 2023.

4-DAY WORK WEEK

Some benefits and challenges for employers who are considering a 4-day work week for their organizations as work flexibility is becoming increasingly important.



Employers have been adjusting to everchanging and shifting priorities during and post-pandemic. At S&G HR Consulting, Sandra & Marina support local businesses to adapt to these changes by providing consulting services, policy development, and training programs that fit their organization's unique, specific needs. For any additional questions, please contact us through our [website](#) or call us at [905-325-3396](tel:905-325-3396).



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Employees that are working in different provinces

There are a number of principles employers should consider if employees that work remotely have moved or been hired in a different province.

- 1) Location of where the employee works will determine the jurisdiction and minimum standards.
- 2) Province of residence is not the determining factor.
- 3) Duration of the work assignment- If you send an employee to BC to do some training for a few weeks, this does not affect their working jurisdiction as it is only a temporary change.
- 4) Remember, every province and/or territory in Canada has its own set of rules with respect to employment standards which include different:
 - Hours of work.
 - Overtime.
 - Statutory holidays.
 - Vacation and vacation pay.
 - Severance and termination pay.
- 5) The Onus is on the employer to track and keep records.

Occupational Health and Safety considerations for remote workers

- 1) Under the provincial OHS legislation employers are responsible for: - providing a safe working environment for employees for the employee working remotely their house is the 'workplace'.
- 2) Employers must exercise a degree of care when it comes to assisting employees in a remote working arrangement - i.e., providing equipment, requiring them to confirm that their home setup is safe, distraction free, conducive to work, etc.
- 3) Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 - Does apply to remote work arrangements which means that employees are required to report injuries occurring from remote work arrangements as if the accident occurred in the regular workplace
- 4) Whether or not a worker's injury will be covered, will depend on whether it was sustained in the course of their performance of work.
- 5) Important to cover OHS in your remote working policy and get sign off on your Health & Safety program. Request pictures of the defined workspace and complete spot checks (i.e., using a webcam).

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Social Connection at work

With many people working remotely or in a hybrid environment, some are feeling isolated. Loneliness is a perception regardless of how many social connections an individual may have. Encouraging meaningful social connections can help reduce loneliness and isolation in the workplace. The benefits of social connections include:

- A stronger immune system
- Lower levels of anxiety and depression
- Greater empathy and higher self-esteem
- An increase in collective intelligence within the workplace
- Quicker recovery from illness
- Enhanced teamwork

As loneliness can be linked to burnout, it is important to find ways to prevent feelings of isolation and loneliness at work. Some effective strategies:

- Identify your employee's needs by conducting weekly check-ins to determine how you can support them as a leader – this can also be achieved through an anonymous survey.
- Make mental health a priority – someone who is lonely may be anxious or depressed. Create opportunities for colleagues to connect through online lunches, coffee breaks, or team activities.
- Promote a psychologically safe environment by encouraging employees to speak and provide feedback without fear of judgment; while being curious, practicing empathy, and listening to understand. Follow the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace \(the Standard\) - Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)
- Foster social connection – create a social spot through a collaborative source such as Microsoft team. Implement brief team building sessions each month, add on to or create a recognition program such as “Thank you Thursdays” to promote peer-to-peer recognition, and shorten 1-hour meetings to 50 minutes to generate virtual ‘hallway’ talks.

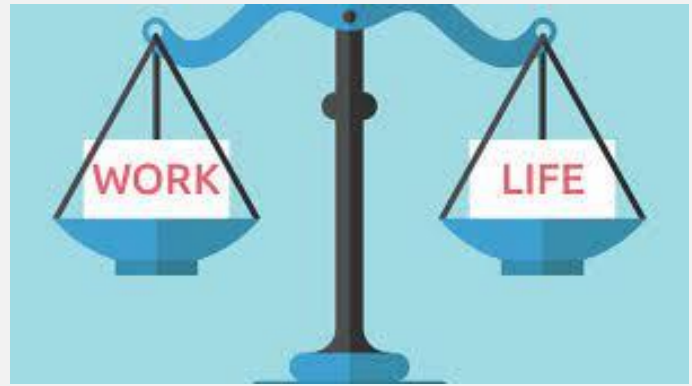
Day of Mourning – April 28, 2023

Following the passage of an Act in Parliament, Canada recognized its first National Day of Mourning on April 28, 1991, for persons who were killed or injured in the workplace. This was observed with flags flying at half-mast and ceremonies held across the country to recognize the lives that were needlessly lost. More than 100 countries have also adopted this observance now widely as Workers' Memorial Day.

On April 28, there will be hundreds of ceremonies across the country where you can participate by lighting your own candle in honour and reflection of the thousands of lives lost or forever changed, and to renew your commitments to the health and safety of your workplace. Organizations are encouraged to observe a moment of silence on April 28 at 11am. You can also show your commitment on social media with #dayofmourning.

4-DAY WORK WEEK

In Canada and globally, employers are considering a 4-day work week for their organizations as work flexibility is becoming increasingly important for employees. While there are many benefits for both employers and employees, some important factors should be considered before making this move.



A recent trial on the 4-day work week was completed in Britain with 61 companies participating for 6 months from June to December. Some key benefits include:

Employees

- 71% were less burned out
- 39% were less stressed
- 60% increase in work-life balance
- 48% increase in job satisfaction
- 20% reduction in commute time

Employers

- 57% decrease in employee resignations
- 65% reduction in absenteeism
- 1.4% to 34% increase in revenue
- 92% said they would continue the 4-day work week

It is important to take the time to design a pilot plan for your organization to ensure you are covering all the details necessary to measure your progress and success rate with the following steps:

1. **Pilot Start date and duration** – setting a time frame that makes sense for your business, during business-as-usual periods and busy times. For example, you can start with 6 months and choose to extend if you do not have enough data to decide.
2. **Impact on hours and compensation** – reviewing salary, vacation, other time-based benefits, pro-rating part-time staff, overtime, and statutory holidays.
3. **Choosing the day** – is it more suitable to have everyone off on the same day (i.e. Monday/Friday) or is it better to have different days off with the desirable days rotated?
4. **Monitoring or evaluation** - how do you know if it is working? Have all necessary mechanisms in place to be accountable such as operating budget and performance appraisal system. The pilot will take time to bear itself out and you need time to trust in the process.
5. **Have an approach for exceptions** – such as long weekends, personal schedules. Are there exceptions and how is it fair to the team overall?
6. **Establish a staff working group** – identify a representative, or empowered group to determine the pilot structure and integrate feedback.

Resources:

[4-day work week trial yields overwhelming success in U.K., researchers say | PBS NewsHour](#)

For your free Organizational Assessment, click [here](#)

For access to further resources and useful links relating to Covid-19, health and safety mandates, and public health updates, please visit: [S&G HR Consulting Resources](#).