

HR QUARTERLY BULLETIN

SPRING 2026

Driving change and shaping the future



LEGAL UPDATES

Long-Term Illness Leave –
Came into effect as of June 19, 2025

Placement of a Child Leave -
Coming into force on a future date

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Building a Healthier & Happier Workplace

Healthy workplace habits improve well-being, boost morale, support productivity, and create an inclusive culture where employees feel energized, valued, and engaged daily.

FEATURE ARTICLE

AI and Women in the Workforce

Artificial intelligence is transforming the way work happens around the world, and employers are driving that change. As AI is reshaping these roles, will organizations ensure that women benefit from this shift?



Employers have been adjusting to everchanging and shifting priorities. 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

Workplace Update: New Leave Provisions You Should Know

Recent updates under the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* and the *Canada Labour Code* introduce new and expanded leave options:

Long-Term Illness Leave – Came into effect as of June 19, 2025

Employees experiencing a serious medical condition may be eligible for:

- Up to 27 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave.
- A medical certificate from a qualified health professional confirming:
 - The existence of a serious medical condition
 - The expected duration of the employee's inability to work
- If the condition persists, employees may:
 - Extend their leave, or
 - Access a new leave within a 52-week period

Placement of a Child Leave - Coming into force on a future date

Employees with at least 13 weeks of service may be eligible for:

- Up to 16 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave.
- Applies when a child is placed in their care through adoption or surrogacy.
- Requires two weeks' written notice to the employer.
- Employers may request reasonable supporting documentation.

Additional resources: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/long-term-illness-leave#:~:text=Take%20our%20survey.-,Overview,to%20a%20serious%20medical%20condition.>

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-229#BK3>

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Building a Healthier & Happier Workplace

Encouraging healthy eating and exercise in the workplace is one of the simplest yet most impactful ways to support employee well-being, engagement, and productivity. When organizations actively promote healthy habits, they create a culture where people feel valued, energized, and better equipped to perform at their best.

Healthy eating at work doesn't require drastic changes. Small initiatives can make a big difference such as providing access to nutritious snacks, sharing simple wellness tips, or encouraging balanced lunch breaks away from desks. When employees have healthier options readily available, they are more likely to make choices that sustain their energy throughout the day, rather than experiencing the highs and lows that come from less nutritious alternatives.

Incorporating movement into the workday is equally important. Many roles involve long periods of sitting, which can impact both physical and mental health. Encouraging short movement breaks, walking meetings, or even light stretching can help employees stay focused and reduce fatigue. Organizations can also promote participation in fitness challenges or offer flexible schedules that allow time for physical activity.

Leadership plays a key role in setting the tone. When managers model healthy behaviours such as taking breaks, prioritizing well-being, and supporting work-life balance it signals to employees that their health truly matters. This creates psychological safety and reduces the stigma that can sometimes be associated with stepping away from work to recharge.

Beyond the physical benefits, promoting healthy habits fosters stronger team connections. Team activities, like wellness challenges or lunchtime walks, create opportunities for collaboration and social interaction. This not only improves morale but also strengthens workplace engagement and overall culture.

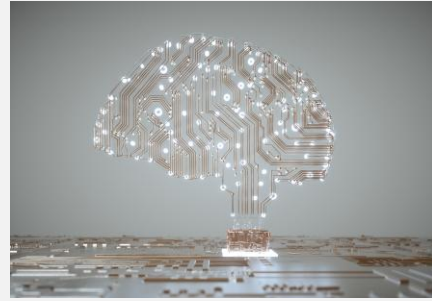
Ultimately, encouraging healthy eating and exercise in the workplace is not about enforcing rules, but about creating an environment where healthy choices are easy and supported. By making small, thoughtful changes, organizations can build a more positive, resilient, and high-performing workforce one where employees feel empowered to take care of both their work and their well-being. Another important element is education and awareness. Providing employees with access to practical resources such as lunch and learn sessions, wellness newsletters, or expert-led workshops can empower them to make informed decisions about their health. When individuals understand the connection between nutrition, movement, and overall well-being, they are more likely to adopt and maintain positive habits both inside and outside of work.

Equally, organizations should strive to create an inclusive approach to wellness. Not every employee will have the same interests, abilities, or starting point when it comes to healthy living. Offering a variety of options such as low-impact activities, mental wellness supports, and flexible participation opportunities ensures that everyone feels encouraged rather than pressured. A thoughtful, inclusive strategy helps build a workplace culture where well-being is accessible, achievable, and sustainable for all.

FEATURE ARTICLE

AI and Women in the Workforce

Artificial intelligence is transforming the way work happens around the world and employers are driving that change. As AI is reshaping these roles, the real question is whether organizations will ensure that women benefit from this shift rather than withstand the worst of it.



Women make up a sizable portion of the roles now being automated: administrative support, coordination, frontline service delivery. These positions keep our organizations running, yet they are also the first to have tasks absorbed by AI. Rather than eliminating jobs, redesigning them with focus on providing training, clarity, and recognition, is essential. Otherwise, we risk quietly increasing expectations without increasing support.

Additionally, women continue to make up only a small share of the global AI workforce, with minimal growth over the past several years. They also remain underrepresented across STEM fields, especially in high-demand areas like engineering and software development.

We need solid labour institutions and real dialogue at the table. When governments, employers, and workers shape GenAI together, we can turn technological disruption into a force for decent work and a more inclusive future.

Alternatively, AI can also represent opportunity. It can reduce administrative overload, expand flexible work, support entrepreneurs, and open doors for women in rural and remote communities. It can free up time for the human-centred work that strengthens teams, culture, and service. The responsibility and the opportunity lie with us.

We can choose to redesign roles instead of cutting them.

We can invest in upskilling instead of assuming people will “figure it out.”

We can audit our AI tools before they make hiring or performance decisions.

We can ensure women are at the table when technology decisions are made

AI is not a neutral force. It reflects the values, assumptions, and priorities of the people who build and implement it. Organizations have an opportunity to lead by ensuring that AI adoption strengthens gender equity rather than undermining it. When women are supported through technological change, the entire workforce becomes more resilient, innovative, and future-ready.

Resources:

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

For access to further resources and useful links relating to legislative updates, health and safety mandates, and other useful links, please visit:

[S&G HR Consulting Resources](#).

