

The HR Essentials Checklist

Use the following checklist to create and maintain a solid HR foundation for your growing business.

Your rewards: reduced legal risks, greater business results, and a better working environment for everyone.

Basic Compliance

- Review and understand employment standards that apply to your business
- Write an employee handbook detailing legislative and company policies
- Draft employment agreements with help from an HR or legal professional
- Ensure your employment records are complete, secure, and easily accessible

Recruiting and Hiring

- Select an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to manage new applicants
- Write detailed job descriptions and post to your careers page
- Design a structured interview and hiring process
- Collaborate with hiring managers to select the best candidate

Time Off Management

- Create and communicate a competitive and compliant time off policy
- Document all employee time off requests, plus time taken and time earned
- Ensure employees take the minimum amount of vacation time (10 days)
- Familiarize yourself with government-mandated leaves of absence, such as parental leave, compassionate care, and public holidays

The HR Essentials Checklist (cont'd)

Onboarding

- Ensure new hire forms are sent and signed before day one
- Initiate a structured onboarding program
- Ensure new hires complete training, both legislated and job-specific

Performance Management

- Schedule regular one-on-ones between managers and employees
- Clearly communicate job expectations and responsibilities
- Document performance reviews, feedback, and progress

People and Culture

- Write down your company mission, vision, and values
- Create an open and productive work environment
- Review your current benefits package to ensure that your coverage is being used optimally and matches the needs of your employees

Employee Benefits

- Review your current benefits package or contact a benefits broker for quotes
- Ensure all new hires are enrolled in a timely manner
- Clearly communicate group benefits to employees via a short booklet or their employee portal

HR Reporting

- Track HR metrics including turnover, department profiles, time off usage, and employee tenure
- Regularly review HR reports with executives and company leaders

HR Resources in Canada

Below are links to important HR, employment standards , and workers' safety resources for Canadian business owners and HR professionals.

Anti-discrimination acts

[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)

[Canada Employment Equity Act](#)

[Canadian Human Rights Act](#)

Employment standards by region

[AB](#) [BC](#) [MB](#) [NB](#) [NL](#) [NS](#) [NT](#)

[NU](#) [ON](#) [PEI](#) [QC](#) [SK](#) [YU](#) [CANADA](#)

Occupational health and safety by region

[AB](#) [BC](#) [MB](#) [NB](#) [NL](#) [NS](#) [NT](#)

[NU](#) [ON](#) [PE](#) [QC](#) [SK](#) [YU](#) [CANADA](#)

Pay equity and payroll

[MB](#) [NB](#) [NS](#) [ON](#) [PEI](#) [QC](#)

[Canada Payroll](#)

[Canada Pension Plan](#)

[Employment Insurance \(EI\) Information for Employers](#)

[Income Tax Act](#)

Workers' compensation

[AB](#) [BC](#) [MB](#) [NB](#) [NL](#) [NS](#) [NT](#)

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