

Global Legislative Update

Law & Policy Group

By Stephanie Rosseau and Fiona Webster
April 2025



In this document

Mercer’s *Global Legislative Update* covers legal developments affecting retirement, health, executive rewards, talent, diversity and inclusion, and other HR programs that affect local and/or expatriate employees. Links to developments with upcoming effective dates covered in past updates are also included to remind employers of impending deadlines. These icons indicate whether employer action is required.

-  Employer action required
-  Potential implications for employers
-  Developments to monitor

Please note: Mercer is not a law firm and therefore cannot provide legal advice. Please consult legal counsel before taking any actions based on the commentary and recommendations in this report.

1. Highlights.....

2. Global.....

3. Americas

4. Asia Pacific.....

5. Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

2

5

7

23

37

Section 1

Highlights

Global	
Artificial Intelligence	Global employer resources
Minimum wage rates	Global employer resources
Remote working	Global employer resources
Reproductive rights	Global employer resources post <i>Dobbs</i> ruling
Americas	
Canada	Regulator issues Guideline B-15 on climate risk management Federal minimum wage increased Information security guidelines issued in British Columbia New pension guidelines issued in New Brunswick Minimum wage increased in Newfoundland and Labrador Minimum wage increased in Nova Scotia Minimum wage increased in Yukon
Panama	Employer social security contributions increased
United States	President Trump rescinds executive order regarding federal contractor minimum wage Guidance on unlawful DEI-related discrimination issued New self-corrections, more flexibility in Voluntary Fiduciary Compliance Program update 2025 state paid family and medical leave contributions and benefits Beyond COBRA: State laws add complexity to continuation coverage Domestic partner benefits remain popular but present challenges Group fixed-indemnity plans pose legal and tax issues Roundup: Employer resources on DOL's final independent contractor rule User's guide to SECURE 2.0 Transportation plans offer valued benefits, but pose compliance issues Roundup: Employer resources on noncompete restrictions Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI Roundup: Employer resources on DOL's expansion of overtime protections Some states require group health plan reporting Resources for tracking state and local retirement initiatives Roundup: Employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws Roundup: Employer resources on states' recreational marijuana laws

Americas (continued)

United States	Prescription law enacted in Arizona Telehealth expansion law enacted in Arkansas 2026 individual-mandate dollar limits set in Massachusetts Pharmacy benefit manager (PBM), prescription law partially effective in Massachusetts Prescription law enacted in Mississippi Benefit and leave laws vary in Puerto Rico Prescription law enacted in Utah
----------------------	---

Asia Pacific

Australia	Cyber security rules effective Life expectancy values updated for lifetime pensions Australian Tax Office confirms Transfer Balance Cap increase Commonwealth data retention review issued Superannuation statistics released Regulator updates information sheets Rates to calculate motor vehicle fringe benefit value updated Reasonable food, drink expenses fringe benefit rules updated Consultation on Payday Super published Regulator proposes changes to strengthen governance requirements for superannuation trustees Regulator releases evolving capital markets paper
China	Family-friendly policies promoted to address demographic challenges Guidance on calculation of average working days
Japan	Unemployment insurance contribution rates reduced Employers have to offer flexible working arrangements Postnatal leave support benefit introduced Continued employment for some older workers mandated
New Zealand	Minimum wage increased Protection against wage theft strengthened
Singapore	Work permit schemes to be revised Government boosts cofounding of low wage schemes Shared parental leave entitlement, mandatory paternity leave now effective

EMEA


Belgium	Minimum wage increased
Channel Islands	Minimum wage increased in Jersey
Czech Republic	Sickness insurance increases for employees under agreements to perform work
Greece	Minimum wage to increase Significant reduction in social security contributions planned for overtime, night shifts, and holidays
Hungary	Vision test required for certain employees Housing allowance introduced for eligible employees
Kenya	Permitted pension contributions increased
Netherlands	Updates on occupational pension reforms

EMEA (continued)	
Poland	Parents now entitled to neonatal leave New public holiday designated from 2025
South Africa	Earnings threshold increased
Sweden	Employers must report employees' absence due to parental and sick child care leave
United Arab Emirates	Revised employment terms apply in Abu Dhabi Global Market
United Kingdom (UK)	Financial regulators will not move forward on diversity and inclusion proposals National insurance contributions increased National minimum wage rates increased Employees allowed neonatal leave Consultation on introduction of compulsory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting Largest pension schemes face deadline to connect to new Pensions Dashboards

Section 2

Global

Artificial Intelligence	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Global employer resources on artificial intelligence</p> <p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become more of a permanent feature of the workplace for many employees and employers around the world and poses numerous challenges and considerations as it reshapes work. To help employers consider the issues associated with AI, the roundup cited below provides links to general information about ongoing legislative and governance initiatives and trends. Sources include Marsh McLennan, organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
Minimum wage	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Roundup: Global employer resources on minimum wage increases</p> <p>To help multinational employers address the different minimum wage rates around the world, the roundup cited below provides links to resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources, and news articles.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
Remote working	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<p>Career — Health — Wealth</p> <p>Roundup: Countries address remote-working issues</p> <p>Remote working has become a more of permanent feature for many employees and employers after various countries introduced COVID-19 measures. Remote working poses challenges and considerations for employers devising or adjusting policies. Issues to consider include the definition of remote work, eligibility criteria, hybrid working arrangements, employee engagement and performance, cybersecurity, health and safety, the right to disconnect, the impact of employees relocating to a different country or state, and the post-pandemic return to the workplace. Several jurisdictions have introduced remote-working legislation that clarifies post-pandemic employer and employee requirements, and others are expected to follow suit. To help employers consider the issues associated with remote working, the roundup cited below provides links to resources from Marsh McLennan, organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.</p>
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated

Reproductive rights	
Status	 Ongoing initiatives
Development	<div>Health</div> <div>Roundup: Global employer resources on reproductive rights post <i>Dobbs</i> ruling In June 2022, the US Supreme Court's <i>Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization</i> decision overturned <i>Roe v. Wade</i>, finding no federal constitutional right to abortion and allowing states to regulate and ban abortions at all stages of pregnancy. To provide multinational employers some information on countries' positions on reproductive rights and the varying employee health benefit plan issues involved, the roundup cited below provides links to organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.</div>
Resources	Roundup, regularly updated

Section 3

Americas

Brazil (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Health

- [Employers must include psychosocial risks in risk-management process](#) — key date: May 26, 2025

Career

- [Measures gradually reintroduce the payroll tax](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026

Canada (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Wealth

Regulator issues Guideline B-15 on climate risk management

The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI), which regulates pension plans falling under the federal Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, released its updated Climate Risk Management Guideline (Guideline B-15: Climate Risk Management). The updated Guideline reflects the commitment to ensure climate-related disclosure guidance remains interoperable with the corresponding requirements of the Canadian Sustainability Standards Board (CSSB) standards of Dec. 18, 2024.

Resources

bonnie.foley-wong@mercer.com

[Climate risk management](#) (OSFI, March 7, 2025)

Canada (previously covered, now effective)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Federal minimum wage increased

The federal minimum wage increased to C\$17.75/hour, up from C17.30, on April 1, 2025. This change applies to workers and interns in federally regulated private sectors, including banks, postal and courier services, and interprovincial air, rail, road, and marine transportation. For those working in provinces or territories where the general minimum wage rate is higher, the higher rate continues to apply. The federal minimum wage is adjusted automatically each April 1 to reflect the average annual increase in the consumer price index.

Resources

[Increasing the federal minimum wage starting April 1, 2025](#) (Government, Feb. 28, 2025)

Canada — British Columbia (new)**Status**  **Effective July 1, 2025****Development****Wealth****Information security guidelines issued**

On March 25, 2025, the BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) released a new standalone Information Security Guideline for B.C. pension plan administrators and a revised Information Security Guideline for Provincially Regulated Financial Institutions to help mitigate information security risks and ensure timely reporting of material security incidents. These new guidelines will take effect on July 1, 2025. Until then, all provincially regulated financial institutions, including pension plan administrators, are expected to follow the Information Security Guideline for Provincially Regulated Financial Institutions issued in 2021.

Resources

kristin.smith@mercero.com

[BCFSA releases information security guidelines](#) (BCFSA, March 25, 2025)

Canada — New Brunswick (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Wealth****New pension guidelines issued**

The Financial and Consumer Services Commission of New Brunswick released 'Guidelines Respecting a Transfer of Assets Involving a Shared Risk Plan.' The guidelines apply to any transfer of assets from a pension plan to a shared risk plan. They specify the general expectations and requirements of the Superintendent of Pensions regarding the transfer of assets and include the application seeking the Superintendent of Pensions' consent for the transfer of assets.

Resources

lori.park@mercero.com

[Pension guidelines: Transfer of assets involving a shared risk plan](#) (Financial and Consumer Services Commission of New Brunswick, Feb. 28, 2025)

Canada — Newfoundland and Labrador (previously covered, now effective)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Minimum wage increased**

On April 1, 2025, the minimum wage increased to C\$16/hour, up from C\$15.60/hour. The minimum overtime rate also increased to C\$24, up from C\$23.40/hour.

Resources

[Minister Dempster announces increase to the minimum wage](#) (Government, Feb. 14, 2025)



Canada — Nova Scotia (previously covered, now effective)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Minimum wage increased**

Nova Scotia introduced a two-phase increase to the minimum wage rate. Effective April 1, 2025, the rate increased to C\$15.70/hour (up from C\$15.20/hour) and then will increase to C\$16.50/hour on Oct. 1, 2025.

Resources

[Minimum wage](#) (Government)

Canada — Yukon (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Career Minimum wage increased Effective April 1, 2025, the minimum wage increased to C\$17.94/hour, up from C\$17.59/hour.
Resources	Yukon minimum wage to increase on April 1, 2025 (Government, March 7, 2025)
Canada (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum wage increased in British Columbia — key date: June 1, 2025 • Rights of digital platform workers enhanced in Ontario — key date: July 1, 2025 • Pay transparency duties to start in Ontario — key date: Jan. 1, 2026 • Employers face required disclosures regarding pay in Ontario — key date: Jan. 1, 2026 Career — Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New leave entitlements in Ontario — key date: Lieutenant Governor will proclaim effective date • ‘Right-to-disconnect’ established for employees — key date: Slated to take effect in 2025 Wealth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension super priority federal legislation enacted — key date: April 27, 2027
Colombia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Wealth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension reforms issued — key date: July 1, 2025
Mexico (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career — Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment rights of digital platform workers to be regulated — key date: June 22, 2025
Panama (new)	
Status	 First increase took effect on March 18, 2025.
Development	Wealth Employer social security contributions increased A phased increase to social security contributions took effect in Panama on March 18, 2025. Employers’ contributions increased to 13.25% (up from 12.25%), and will increase to 14.25% on March 1, 2027, and then to 15.25% on March 1, 2029. Employee contributions remain at 9.7%.
Resources	Law 462 (Spanish) (Official Gazette, March 18, 2025)
Peru (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career — Wealth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension system modernization law issued — key date: unknown

United States (US) (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>President Trump rescinds executive order regarding federal contractor minimum wage</p> <p>On March 14, 2025, President Trump rescinded President Biden's 2021 Executive Order 14026 requiring federal contractors to pay a \$15 hourly minimum wage to workers for new federal contract solicitations starting Jan. 30, 2022. Since then, the hourly minimum wage had increased to \$17.75/hour. Federal appeals courts had different positions on the legality of the 2021 order. Going forward, the <i>Roundup: US employer resources on \$15/hour or higher minimum wage rates</i> will be updated to reflect this development and include articles relating to the rescission's impact.</p>
Resources	<p>Additional rescissions of harmful executive orders and actions (The White House, March 14, 2025); Increasing the Minimum Wage for Federal Contractors (Federal Register, April 17, 2021) and Roundup: US employer resources on \$15/hour or higher minimum wage rates (Mercer, regularly updated)</p>
US (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Guidance on unlawful DEI-related discrimination issued</p> <p>The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) released two technical assistance documents focused on unlawful discrimination related to “diversity, equity, and inclusion” (DEI) in the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint one-page technical assistance document, “What To Do If You Experience Discrimination Related to DEI at Work” • A longer question-and-answer technical assistance document, “What You Should Know About DEI-Related Discrimination at Work” (EEOC). <p>For more information and analysis on the state of DEI, see the <i>Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI</i>.</p>
Resources	<p>EEOC and Justice Department warn against unlawful DEI-related discrimination (EEOC, March 19, 2025) and Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI (Mercer, regularly updated)</p>

US (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Wealth New self-corrections, more flexibility in Voluntary Fiduciary Compliance Program update In the first updates to the Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program (VFCP) since 2006, the Department of Labor (DOL) has added a new self-correction option for delinquent participant contributions to retirement plans and provided more flexibility for correcting several other ERISA violations. The agency has also implemented the statutory directive under the SECURE 2.0 Act (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328) to align participant loan corrections with IRS's Employee Plans Compliance Resolution System (EPCRS). Amendments to the related class prohibited transaction exemption (PTE 2002-51) expand excise tax relief for a subset of VFCP corrections by removing limitations on how often applicants can rely on the PTE. However, DOL deferred action on a broader program expansion that would have included corrections for missing participant issues. The amendments to the VFCP and PTE take effect March 17.
Resources	GRIST , March 17, 2025 matthew.calloway@mercero.com , margaret.berger@mercero.com , and brian.kearney@mercero.com
US	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	Career — Health 2025 state paid family and medical leave contributions and benefits Mandates requiring paid leave for an employee's own health condition exist in many states — California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington — along with Puerto Rico and Washington, DC. Delaware, Maine, Maryland and Minnesota will start similar programs in the next few years. Except for Hawaii and Puerto Rico, these jurisdictions also require paid family leave. Voluntary group family leave insurance is now available in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Private employers may opt-in to the state program for governmental employees in New Hampshire and Vermont.
Resources	rich.glass@mercero.com and katharine.marshall@mercero.com GRIST , updated Jan. 29, 2025 and Paid family and medical leave: Snapshots across the US (Mercer, January 2025)
US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health Beyond COBRA: State laws add complexity to continuation coverage Though COBRA has endured for decades, state continuation laws are its less familiar sidekick. These laws (often referred to as "mini-COBRA" laws), fill in COBRA's gaps, particularly for small employers offering fully insured group health plans as well as fully insured large-employer group health plans (often referred to as "post-COBRA" laws), where coverage is required beyond COBRA's normal time frames. The GRIST cited below summarizes the major aspects of state continuation requirements.
Resources	rich.glass@mercero.com GRIST , Nov. 12, 2024

US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Domestic partner benefits remain popular but present challenges</p> <p>Domestic partner benefits continue to be common among many employers. However, compliance complexities present challenges for employers. The GRIST cited below (with minor updates and clarifications) reviews the major issues, particularly related to taxation and documentation, and provides useful tools, including a tax dependent flow chart, an employer domestic partner checklist and two tables summarizing applicable state laws.</p>
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com and patty.cartwright@mercer.com GRIST , regularly updated
US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Group fixed-indemnity plans pose legal, tax issues</p> <p>Concerns that fixed-indemnity plans may too easily be mistaken for comprehensive medical coverage or may improperly treat some benefit payments as tax free has led to a final rule from the departments of Labor, Treasury, and Health and Human Services. The rule requires fixed-indemnity plans to supply a new consumer notice beginning in 2025, but omits more sweeping proposals that would have required many employers to redesign their fixed-indemnity coverage. Treasury proposals to clarify the tax treatment of employer-provided accident and health plans — particularly the tax treatment of fixed-indemnity plans — also were left out of the final rule. The GRIST cited below provides background information about group fixed-indemnity plans, details about the new consumer notice, an overview of proposals left out of the final rule, and a summary of IRS guidance identifying a variety of fixed-indemnity designs (often paired with a wellness program) as improper “double dipping” schemes. This article also summarizes provisions in the rule addressing individual fixed-indemnity plans and short-term limited duration insurance.</p>
Resources	jennifer.wiseman@mercer.com and cheryl.hughes@mercer.com GRIST , Aug. 27, 2024
US	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Roundup: Employer resources on DOL’s final independent contractor rule</p> <p>On Jan. 9, 2024, the DOL announced a final rule that revises how to determine if an individual is an independent contractor or an employee entitled to minimum wage, overtime and other protections under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. The controversial rule took effect on March 11, 2024. To provide employers with some information about the rule and the varying aspects and issues to consider, this roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles and viewpoints. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. The content also does not necessarily reflect Mercer’s or the authors’ point of view on the subject.</p>
Resources	Roundup: Employer resources on DOL’s final independent contractor rule (Mercer, regularly updated)

US

Status

**Effective dates vary.**

Development

Wealth**User's guide to SECURE 2.0**

A dizzying array of legislation affecting defined contribution (DC) and defined benefit (DB) plans became law on Dec. 29, 2022, as part of a fiscal 2023 government spending package. Capping several years of congressional efforts, the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 (Div. T of Pub. L. No. 117-328) is intended to build on changes made by the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act of 2019 (Div. O of Pub. L. No. 116-94).

Navigating SECURE 2.0 is a formidable challenge. The statute consists of 120 pages of text and 90 individual sections — with no table of contents. To help employers and plan sponsors understand the legislation's implications, this guide provides a high-level summary of SECURE 2.0 provisions grouped topically, including separate treatment of provisions specific to DC and DB plans.

The six tables in this guide describe statutory changes and their effective dates, identify whether the changes are mandatory or optional for employers, and provide initial observations, including implementation challenges for which agency guidance would be helpful. The act also includes several apparent drafting errors for which Congress intends to introduce technical corrections legislation. Those errors are noted in the relevant sections of the guide.

This guide doesn't address SECURE 2.0's employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) provisions and a handful of other nonbenefit-related provisions. When referring to the original SECURE Act, this guide uses the term "SECURE 1.0" to avoid any confusion between the laws.

This guide will be updated periodically to reflect additional information and guidance.

Resources

margaret.berger@mercer.com, matthew.calloway@mercer.com and brian.kearney@mercer.com
[User's guide to SECURE 2.0](#), periodically updated

US

Status

**Effective dates vary.**

Development

Career — Health**Transportation plans offer valued benefits, but pose compliance issues**

Since 1998, employees have been able to pay for qualified transportation fringe benefits through pretax salary reductions under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) § 132(f), and these benefits have become quite popular. (Employers could provide this benefit on a tax-advantaged basis as early as 1992.) The tax exemption extends to commuting expenses for transit passes, qualified parking, van pools, and in certain years, bicycles.

While these benefits are not subject to cafeteria plan or ERISA rules, compliance difficulties exist, and a 2018 tax law that will expire at the end of 2025 added complexities. The federal monthly limits are adjusted every year, most recently for 2024. Some state and local jurisdictions have imposed employer mandates — including one that applies to Chicago-area employers starting in 2024 — leveraging the tax advantage of commuter benefits; other jurisdictions provide tax-related incentives.

Resources

rich.glass@mercer.com and cheryl.hughes@mercer.com
[GRIST](#), regularly updated

US

Status

**Effective dates vary.**

Development

Career**Roundup: Employer resources on noncompete restrictions**

Noncompete agreements prevent former employees from working for a competing employer or starting a competing business for a certain time after their employment ends. At the federal level, former President Biden, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and Congress have attempted to ban or limit the use of noncompete agreements. The FTC's final rule banning noncompetes was scheduled to be effective Sept. 4, 2024, but on Aug. 20, 2024, a federal judge in Texas blocked the rule from taking effect nationwide. While the FTC has appealed the ruling, the rule will remain on hold until a future judicial decision either permanently blocks it or upholds it as lawful. The rule has been challenged in other lawsuits, with conflicting results. These divergent rulings and the impact of the recent Supreme Court Loper decision that overturned the "Chevron doctrine" of deference to federal agencies have led to employer uncertainty as to how to proceed. The Trump administration may also affect the fate of noncompetition provisions.

At the state level, several states have generally banned noncompete agreements. Numerous other states have enacted restrictions, such as only allowing noncompete agreements for employees above a certain salary threshold. This roundup focuses on recent federal and state actions to restrict noncompete provisions and provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles.

Resources

[Roundup](#), regularly updated

US

Status

**Currently effective**

Development

Career**Roundup: Employer resources on the changing landscape of DEI**

In June 2023, the US Supreme Court in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* ruled colleges' use of race as a factor in student admissions is unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. Since the decision, various viewpoints have emerged on the ruling's effect on companies' diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs. While the Biden administration actively supported affirmative action and various DEI initiatives, President Trump's administration has adopted a firm stance against DEI programs in both the federal government and private sectors, issuing several executive orders (EOs) to limit these efforts. This roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles and viewpoints about the varying aspects and issues to consider regarding employers' DEI programs.

Resources

[Roundup](#), regularly updated

US

Status

**Currently effective**

Development

Career**Roundup: Employer resources on DOL's expansion of overtime protections**

This roundup provides some information on the US Department of Labor's (DOL) final rule that would have significantly expanded overtime protections. This rule has been challenged in multiple lawsuits, and on Nov. 15, 2024, a Texas federal district court judge vacated and set aside the final rule on a nationwide basis — holding that it exceeded the DOL's statutory authority under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). As a result, the 2025 increases did not go into effect, and the July 2024 increases were revoked. On Feb. 28, 2025, the DOL appealed a December 2024 Texas federal court's decision that also blocked the rule. Both cases were appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. This roundup provides links to government information, third-party analyses, news articles and viewpoints. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. The content also does not necessarily reflect Mercer's or the authors' point of view on the subject.

Resources

[Roundup](#), regularly updated

US — States

Status

**Compliance dates vary.**

Development

Health**Some states require group health plan sponsor reporting**

Several states and localities have group health plan reporting requirements. The GRIST cited below summarizes key reporting mandates in three categories: individual health coverage mandates, health plan assessments and surcharges, and other types of reporting. This year, a new table was added to describe individual tax liability for failure to maintain minimum essential coverage (MEC) in the five states (plus Washington, DC) that impose MEC mandates.

Resources

rich.glass@mercer.com and dorian.smith@mercer.com
[GRIST](#), regularly updated

US — States

Status

**Effective dates vary.**

Development

Wealth**Resources for tracking state and local retirement initiatives**

This article summarizes state and local retirement initiatives for private-sector workers and rounds up relevant Mercer and third-party resources. This listing is updated periodically and may not always reflect the latest development in every locality.

Resources

margaret.berger@mercer.com and brian.kearney@mercer.com
[GRIST](#), regularly updated

US — States**Status****Effective dates vary.****Development****Career****Roundup: Employer resources on states' recent equal pay laws**



The federal Equal Pay Act of 1963 requires that men and women in the same workplace receive equal pay for equal work. In recent years, many states have taken further efforts to address equal pay, such as enacting laws that prohibit employers from asking job applicants about salary history, requiring disclosure of salary ranges and pay data, protecting employees who disclose their pay, expanding equal pay protections for characteristics other than sex, and broadening comparisons of work and pay. In 2023, New Jersey and Illinois expanded equal pay protections to temporary workers. Stronger federal legislation — the Paycheck Fairness Act — was first introduced in 1997 but has not passed after numerous attempts — most recently in June 2021.

This roundup primarily focuses on recent state legislative initiatives pertaining to salary history bans and salary range disclosure requirements that affect private sector employers, and provides links to state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles. Certain cities have also acted, but they are generally beyond the scope of this roundup.

Resources[Roundup](#), regularly updated**US — States****Status****Effective dates vary.****Development****Career****Roundup: Employer resources on states' recreational marijuana laws**

Twenty-four states, plus Guam and Washington, DC, have legalized the possession and personal use of marijuana for recreational purposes. To provide employers with some information on states' actions and the varying employment considerations involved, this roundup provides links to organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints on marijuana usage for recreational purposes. Thirty-eight states, plus Guam, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and Washington, DC, have legalized marijuana use for medical purposes, but this roundup focuses on legal recreational marijuana use and its implications for employers. The aggregated content in each section is organized in reverse chronological order and is by no means comprehensive. It also does not necessarily reflect Mercer's or the authors' point of view on the subject.

Resources[Roundup](#), regularly updated

US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	Career Roundup: Employer resources on minimum wage increases On March 14, 2025, President Trump rescinded former President Biden’s April 2021 executive order requiring federal contractors to pay a \$15 hourly minimum wage to workers for new federal contract solicitations starting Jan. 30, 2022 and increasing to \$17.75/hour in 2025. Federal appeals courts have different positions on the legality of the 2021 order, and the Department of Labor rules implementing the order remain in place. Executive Order 13658 — which was implemented by the Obama administration and currently requires federal contractors to pay \$13.30/hour — also remains. Numerous states have taken action to gradually increase the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour for most employees. To help employers prepare and address related issues, this roundup provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party resources and news articles.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
US — States	
Status	 Effective dates vary.
Development	Career Roundup: Employer resources on hairstyle nondiscrimination laws The Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (CROWN) Act movement in the United States aims to prohibit discrimination based on natural hair texture or hairstyles normally associated with race, such as braids, locks, twists, curls, cornrows, Afros, head wraps or bantu knots. The official campaign of the CROWN Act is led by the CROWN Coalition. Federal legislation, supported by the Biden administration, passed the House during the last session of Congress — but was not enacted. Many states have already passed CROWN Acts, and many others are considering legislation. To help employers ensure their employee handbooks and appearance policies are nondiscriminatory and comply with federal, state, and local laws, the roundup cited below provides links to federal and state resources from organizations, government websites, third-party analysis, news articles and viewpoints.
Resources	Roundup , regularly updated
US — Arizona (new)	
Status	 Effective for plan years starting in 2026.
Development	Health Prescription law enacted As a result of 2025 Ch. 5 (SB 1102), pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) that contract with insurers cannot exclude or limit Rx coverage if it was previously approved by the PBM. This requirement applies through the end of the current plan year. PBMs must give affected participants at least 60 days’ notice before any formulary change takes effect. In that event, coverage will continue through the end of the plan year and may continue thereafter if approved through the plan’s exception process, which must meet newly adopted standards. Arizona generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.
Resources	rich.glass@mercer.com 2025 Ch. 5 (SB 1102, March 25, 2025)

US — Arkansas (new)**Status****Currently effective****Development****Health****Telehealth expansion law enacted**

Arkansas passed 2025 Act 259 (SB 119), which enables the state to join the interstate medical licensure compact, aimed at increasing healthcare through telehealth and other means.

Licensed physicians in member states that have signed on to the compact may qualify for an expedited license. Currently, 40 other states and Washington, DC, are members of the compact. The law took effect on enactment.

Resources

rich.glass@mercer.com

[2025 Act 259](#) (SB 119) (Legislature, March 12, 2025)

US — Massachusetts (new)**Status****Effective Jan. 1, 2026****Development****Health****2026 individual-mandate coverage dollar limits set**

The Massachusetts Health Connector has published 2026 dollar limits on deductibles and other cost sharing for minimum creditable coverage (MCC), as required by regulations (956 CMR 5.00). The Massachusetts individual mandate, in effect since 2007, requires state residents to maintain MCC or face a potential state tax penalty. Employers are not mandated to provide MCC, but many employees use employment-based health coverage to satisfy the individual mandate. In addition, health plan reporting requirements compel plan sponsors (or their vendors) to determine whether their coverage meets MCC standards. Deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums (OOPMs) are reviewed annually and typically adjusted.

Regulations also clarify MCC criteria for health arrangements provided by religious organizations.

Employers with health plans covering employees residing in Massachusetts should take these steps:

- Determine if the plan covering state residents satisfies MCC requirements.
- Contact the insurer or TPA to find out if it will send Form MA 1099-HC and report to the DOR.
- Complete any requested attestation by a vendor's requested due date.
- Complete an MCC application for any plan deviating from MCC standards, if not previously certified.
- Plan for any changes needed to offer MCC in 2026.

Resources

rich.glass@mercer.com

[GRIST](#), March 17, 2025

US — Massachusetts (previously covered, partially effective)

Status



Effective dates vary.

Development

Health

Pharmacy benefit manager (PBM), prescription law partially effective

Massachusetts enacted 2024 Ch. 342 (SB 3012), requiring licensure of PBMs and imposing requirements on health insurers and Medicaid. Here is a summary:

- PBM licensure takes effect on Jan. 1, 2026. PBMs may not make payments to brokers or consultants that constitute a conflict of interest. This includes offering shared rebates, per prescription or per member fees, referrals fees and bonuses.
- Fully insured plans and Medicaid must cover one generic drug and one brand-name drug to treat diabetes, asthma and the two most prevalent heart conditions among members. This coverage is not subject to cost sharing (generic) and cannot have more than a \$25 copayment for a 30-day supply (brand name). These requirements will take effect for contracts entered into, renewed or amended on or after July 1.
- The law also requires pharmacies — at the point of sale — to charge participants the lesser of a drug's cost-sharing amount, or the pharmacy's retail price. This provision appears to take effect on or about April 9.

It is not clear whether Massachusetts applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state. The law does not affect self-funded ERISA plans.

Resources

rich.glass@mercer.com

[2024 Ch. 342](#) (SB 3012) (Legislature, Jan. 9, 2025)

US — Mississippi (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Health

Prescription law enacted

Mississippi has enacted HB 17— the Protecting Patient Access to Physician-Administered Drugs Act that protects participant access to physician-administered drugs and prohibits insurers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) from engaging in these activities:

- Refusing to pay a participating provider for providing covered physician-administered drugs and related covered services to plan participants
- Requiring plan participants to pay any penalty or additional fee — other than cost sharing — for obtaining a physician-administered drug from a participating provider.

The new law took immediate effect on March 21.



Mississippi law broadly defines PBMs to include entities working on behalf of “plan sponsors, insurance companies, unions and health maintenance organizations” so the application of this law to self-funded ERISA plans is unclear.

Mississippi generally applies its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to state residents covered by fully insured plans issued in another state.

Resources

rich.glass@mercer.com

[The Protecting Patient Access to Physician-Administered Drugs Act](#) (Legislature, March 21, 2025)

US — Puerto Rico	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Benefit and leave laws vary</p> <p>Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory within the US with a separate tax code and constitution and its own tax, benefit and insurance laws. Nonetheless, many (but not all) US laws apply to this territory of a little more than three million residents. The GRIST cited below summarizes major requirements and special issues, including an overview of complicated tax-related health and fringe benefit rules, leave laws, the ACA and more.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>GRIST, Aug. 12, 2024</p>
US — Utah (new)	
Status	 Effective May 7, 2025
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Prescription law enacted</p> <p>Under HB 257, fully insured plans may only use rebates for these purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing an offset of cost sharing at the point of sale • Reducing participant premiums • Enhancing benefits <p>In addition, plans may not prohibit or condition participation in one network on participation in another network. Finally, PBMs working with self-funded plans must offer an option that does not include spread pricing. Utah generally does not apply its insurance laws on an extraterritorial basis to fully insured plans issued in another state, unless more than 25% of participants reside in Utah.</p>
Resources	<p>rich.glass@mercer.com</p> <p>SB 257 (Legislature, March 27, 2025)</p>

US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)

Development

Career

- [Salary disclosures, wage data reporting to be required in Massachusetts](#) — key date: July 31, 2025
- [Salary disclosures to be required in job advertisements in Vermont](#) — key date: July 31, 2025
- [Hourly minimum wage to increase to \\$18 in Hawaii](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Artificial Intelligence law focused on employment laws enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Artificial intelligence law enacted; will significantly affect employers in Colorado](#) — key date: Feb. 1, 2026

Career — Health

- [Paid sick and safe leave initiative approved in Missouri](#) — key date: May 1, 2025
- [Paid family medical leave effective dates delayed in Maryland](#) — key date: July 1, 2025, but could be delayed further
- [Pharmacy benefit manager regulations finalized in New York](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Paid sick leave initiative approved in Nebraska](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025
- [Paid family and medical leave mandated in Minnesota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Paid family medical leave rates adjusted in Minnesota](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026

Career — Health — Wealth

- [Law will require promotion opportunity disclosures, pay transparency in job postings in New Jersey](#) — June 2025

Health

- [Paid sick and safe leave initiative approved in Missouri](#) — key date: May 1, 2025
- [Multiemployer welfare arrangements laws enacted in California](#) — June 1, 2025
- [Network adequacy rules for fully insured plans issued](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Insulin cost-sharing law enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Data protection law enacted in Tennessee](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Doula coverage mandated in Delaware](#) — key date: plan years beginning in 2026
- [2026 individual-mandate coverage dollar limits set in Massachusetts](#) — Key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Dependent coverage law enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Plan years starting in 2026
- [Prescription drug law enacted in Virginia](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Law applies balance billing restrictions to ground ambulance providers in Texas](#) — key date: expires Sept. 1, 2025
- [Telehealth law to expire in Hawaii](#) — key date: Dec. 31, 2025
- [Mental health parity changes](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Telehealth law enacted in Colorado](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [New law focuses on prior authorization practices for fully insured plans in Colorado](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Abortion coverage required in Delaware](#) — key date: Plan years starting on or after Jan. 1, 2026
- [Colonoscopy coverage mandate enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Plan years starting in 2026
- [Fertility-related insurance laws enacted in Illinois](#) — key date: Plan years starting in 2026

US (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates) (continued)

Development

Health (continued)


- [Pregnancy-related services coverage mandate enacted in Illinois — key date: Jan. 1, 2026](#)
- [Paid family and medical leave law enacted in Minnesota — key date: Jan. 1, 2026](#)
- [Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in Pennsylvania — key date: Jan. 1, 2026](#)
- [Telehealth laws enacted in Washington — key date: Jan. 1, 2026](#)
- [Pharmacy benefit manager law enacted in Washington — key date: Jan. 1, 2026](#)
- [Telehealth parity extended in New Jersey — key date: July 1, 2026](#)
- [Prior authorization insurance law enacted in Wyoming — key date: July 1, 2026](#)
- [State-based exchange delivery to change in Oregon — key date: Nov. 1, 2026](#)

Wealth

- [PBGC premium acceleration set to take effect for 2025 — key date: Sept. 15, 2025](#)
- [Effective date for portion of upcoming required minimum distribution regulations delayed — key date: Jan. 1, 2026](#)
- [Tax withholding rule for pension payments outside of the US finalized — key date: Jan. 1, 2026](#)
- [IRS delays SECURE 2.0's Roth catch-up mandate — key date: 2026](#)

Section 4

Asia Pacific

Australia (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Cyber security rules effective</p> <p>Cyber Security Legislative Package 2024 rules took effect on March 4, 2025. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyber Security (Ransomware Payment Reporting) Rules 2025• Cyber Security (Cyber Incident Review Board) Rules 2025• Cyber Security (Security Standards for Smart Devices) Rules. <p>The new detailed reporting requirements for ransomware payments apply to “reporting business entities” — this appears to include most registrable superannuation entities and registrable entities of regulated super funds and managed investment schemes respectively.</p> <p>An entity must provide a ransomware payment report if it is a reporting business entity; is impacted by a cyber security incident; and has provided or is aware that another entity has provided — on their behalf — a ransomware payment to an entity that is seeking to benefit from the impact or the cyber security incident.</p> <p>The ransomware payment report must include specified information, such as information about the cyber security incident, the demand made by the extorting entity and the ransomware payment.</p>
Resources	<p>paul.shallue@mercer.com</p> <p>Cyber Security (Ransomware Payment Reporting) Rules 2025 (Legislature); Cyber Security (Cyber Incident Review Board) Rules 2025 (Legislature); and Cyber Security (Security Standards for Smart Devices) Rules (Legislature)</p>

Australia (new)

Status  **Currently effective**

Development

Wealth

Life expectancy values updated for lifetime pensions

The Department of Social Services has determined that the Australian Life Tables 2020-22 will apply to all lifetime income streams established from Jan. 1, 2025.

The life tables will impact the Centrelink means-testing treatment for relevant lifetime income streams. Specifically, the assessable asset value is set at 60% of the purchase price until it reduces to 30% at age 85 (up from age 84), subject to completing a minimum period of five years following purchase.

These new life expectancy factors were introduced retrospectively, but due to the minimum five-year duration on the higher asset test amount, individuals will have time to account for the revised treatment.

Resources

paul.shallue@mercer.com

[Australian Life Tables 2020-22](#) (Government, December 2024)

Australia (new)

Status  **Effective July 1, 2025**

Development

Wealth

Australian Tax Office confirms Transfer Balance Cap increase


The Australian Tax Office (ATO) has confirmed that the general transfer balance cap will increase to AU\$2 million, up from AU\$1.9 million, on July 1, 2025, and the defined benefit income cap will increase to AU\$125,000 for the 2025-26 income year. The ATO has also outlined the implications for:

- Personal Transfer Balance Cap (TBC):
 - The ATO calculates an individual's personal TBC based on the information reported to, and processed by, the ATO.
 - Individuals with a personal TBC will be entitled to an increased cap if they have not previously been at, or exceeded, their cap. The increase will depend on their unused cap.
 - Individuals starting a pension for the first time on or after July 1, 2025 will be entitled to a personal TBC of AU\$2 million.
- Total Super Balance (TSB):
 - The TSB impacts an individual's nonconcessional contributions cap, nonconcessional bring forward arrangement and eligibility for spouse tax offset and co-contributions.

Resources

paul.shallue@mercer.com

[General transfer balance cap indexation on 1 July 2025](#) (ATO, Feb. 25, 2025)

Australia (new)**Status**  **Under review****Development****Wealth****Commonwealth data retention review issued**

Australia's Department of Home Affairs and the Attorney-General's Department is co-leading the Commonwealth Data Retention Review covering legislative data retention provisions that place obligations on industry (including superannuation fund trustees and administrators and other service providers) and may create rights for members. The period for input closed on March 21, 2025. The review is a key initiative in the 2023-30 Australian Cyber Security Strategy.

Resources

paul.shallue@mercero.com

[Discussion paper for the data retention review](#) (Department, March 2025)

Australia (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Wealth****Superannuation statistics released**

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) has released its Quarterly Superannuation Performance publication and the Quarterly My Super Statistics report for the December 2024 quarter. The industry performance statistics contains aggregate summaries of financial performance and position, asset allocation and key performance ratios. Statistics relating to corporate, industry, public sector and retail funds performance are also detailed. The My Super statistics contains data relating to product profile, asset allocation targets and ranges, investment performance and net returns, as well as fees and costs.


Total superannuation assets increased by 2.1% over the quarter to reach AU\$4.2 trillion as at December 2024 (of which AU\$2.9 trillion is in APRA-regulated funds). For the year ending December 2024, total contributions increased by 14.8% to AU\$198.1 billion and benefit payments increased by 12% to AU\$124.4 billion.

Resources


paul.shallue@mercero.com

[APRA releases superannuation statistics for December 2024](#) (APRA, Feb. 27, 2025)

Australia (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Wealth Regulator updates information sheets <p>The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has issued minor updates to the following information sheets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info 218 Disputes about life insurance • Info 229 Limited Australian Financial Services licensees: Complying with your licensing obligations • Info 264 FAQs: Design and distribution obligations for advice licensees and financial advisers. <p>The changes include updates and clarifications to dispute-related information (such as the replacement of references to “external dispute resolution scheme” with the Australian Financial Complaints Authority).</p>
Resources	paul.shallue@mercer.com Info 218 (ASIC); Info 229 (ASIC) and Info 264 (ASIC)
Australia (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health Rates to calculate motor vehicle fringe benefit value updated <p>Taxation Determination No. TD 2025/1, issued by the Australian Taxation Office on March 26, 2025, updates the rates for calculating the taxable value of fringe benefits for the private use of a motor vehicle other than a car. The revised amounts are applicable to the fringe benefits tax year beginning April 1, 2025.</p>
Resources	Taxation Determination No. TD 2025/1 (Australian Taxation Office, March 26, 2025)
Australia (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health Reasonable food, drink expenses fringe benefit rules updated <p>The Australian Taxation Office has updated the permitted reasonable expense amounts for food and drink incurred by employees that receive a fringe benefit allowance for living away from home, either within, or outside, Australia. The fringe benefit amounts are included in Taxation Determination No. TD 2025/2.</p>
Resources	Taxation Determination No. TD 2025/2 (Australian Taxation Office, March 26, 2025)

Australia (new)	
Status	 Consultation is open through April 11, 2025.
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Consultation on Payday Super published</p> <p>The government has released draft legislation and regulations to implement the Payday Super reform that is slated to start on July 1, 2026. Under the proposals, employers would be required to pay their employees' super at the same time as their salary and wages, and updated penalties and charges would apply to late or missed super payments. The Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services estimated that the Payday Super reform could result in a 25-year-old median income earner being AU\$6,000 or 1.5% better off at retirement. The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) had earlier published information on the reform. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions would have to arrive in employees' super funds within seven calendar days of payments with an ordinary time earnings (OTE) component. • The SuperStream data and payment standards would be revised to allow payments made via the New Payments Platform. • Employers would need to report both OTE and Super Liability fields via their Single Touch Payroll (STP) software. • An updated super guarantee (SG) charge calculation would apply, including the recognition of late contributions. • Additional penalties would apply for failure to pay a SG charge debt issued by the ATO. • Closure of the Small Business Super Clearing House from July 1, 2026. • Revised choice of fund rules that would allow employers to show current stapled funds to employees as part of their onboarding procedures.
Resources	<p>paul.shallue@mercero.com</p> <p>Payday super — exposure draft (The Treasury, March 14, 2025); Payday Super consultation continues (ATO, Feb. 23, 2025) and Payday superannuation (ATO, March 13, 2025)</p>

Australia (new)

Status	 Proposal
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Regulator proposes changes to strengthen governance requirements for superannuation trustees</p> <p>On March 6, 2025, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) issued eight proposals to strengthen its prudential governance framework for banks, insurers and superannuation trustees. The proposals would ensure that the governance standards reflect best practice, establish clear benchmarks for regulated entities, and address current areas of poor practice. They also would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lift the requirements for boards to have the right mix of skills and experience • Raise minimum standards applicable to the fitness and propriety of responsible persons, and require significant financial institutions to engage with APRA on succession planning and potential appointments • Expand the current requirements for super trustees on the management of conflicts of interest to include banking and insurance • Strengthen board independence, especially in relation to entities that are part of a group • Clarify APRA's expectations for the roles of boards, the chair and senior management • Introduce a maximum 10-year tenure for nonexecutive directors in APRA-regulated entities. <p>APRA also aims to remove duplicative or unnecessary requirements and will seek stakeholder feedback. It intends to release the updated prudential standards and guidance for formal consultation in the first half of 2026, and publish the updated framework by the beginning of 2027 — ahead of its commencement in 2028.</p>
Resources	<p>paul.shallue@mercero.com</p> <p>APRA proposes changes to strengthen and streamline governance and fit and proper requirements (APRA, March 6, 2025)</p>

Australia (new)

Status	 Consultation is open through April 28, 2025.
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>Regulator releases evolving capital markets paper</p> <p>The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has released a discussion paper for comment on the opportunities and risks arising from the changing dynamics in public and private capital markets in Australia and overseas. Comments are invited through April 28, 2025. The paper sets out 15 discussion questions aimed at facilitating stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>The paper highlights that between 2014 to 2024 the value of ASX-listed entities nearly doubled (AU\$1.575 trillion to AU\$3.007 trillion) but the number of ASX-listed companies decreased. Over the same period, the value of private capital funds increased by 161% to AU\$148.6 billion, and the value of the superannuation system increased by 118% to AU\$4.083 trillion.</p> <p>ASIC said that although private markets offer new opportunities for many investors, they come with additional risk, and warned that Australia cannot be “complacent.”</p>
Resources	<p>paul.shallue@mercero.com</p> <p>Advancing Australia's regulatory roadmap for public and private capital markets (ASIC, Feb. 26, 2025)</p>

Australia (new)



Development

Career — Health — Wealth



- [Superannuation contributions on paid parental leave legislation enacted](#) — key date: July 1, 2025

Wealth

- [Changes to Operational Risk Financial Requirement finalized](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Updated guidance on strategic planning and member outcomes issued](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [New operational risk management standard to apply](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [Operational resilience guidance finalized](#) — key date: July 1, 2025
- [APRA Super Data Transformation, Phase 2 enhancements finalized](#) — key date: December 2025
- [Extension of superannuation disclosure relief confirmed](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2026
- [Anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism legislation effective](#) — key date: March 31, 2026

China (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Family-friendly policies promoted to address demographic challenges</p> <p>In October 2024, China announced a policy framework that aims to address demographic challenges, including the low-fertility rate and aging population. Issued by the State Council to local governments, the framework outlined 13 targeted measures “to enhance childbirth support services, expand child care systems, strengthen support in education, housing and employment and foster a birth-friendly social atmosphere.” The measures will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance maternity insurance to cover medical expenses and maternity allowances for insured female employees. • Improve the maternity leave system, including supervision of the implementation of different leaves (such as maternity, paternity and parental). • Establish birth subsidies and other arrangements, including implementation of a special personal income tax deduction for infant care and education of children under age three. • Increase the number of public and public-private child care facilities and expand the services they offer. Localities should also support different child care models, such as employer-run child care and family child care centers. • Expand the supply of high-quality educational resources and encourage local communities to introduce practical measures to help working parents. • Strengthen housing support policies, including support for families with several children to buy their own house. • Strengthen the protection of employees’ rights and interests, including measures to support female employees who are pregnant, have recently given birth or breastfeeding. Employers are encouraged, where possible, to adopt flexible commuting and remote work policies that help create a family-friendly working environment, and to introduce other flanking measures (such as after-school care and school vacation schemes). • Strengthen reproductive health services. • Improve pediatric medical services. • Offer support for “a new type of marriage and childbearing culture” that respects “the social value of childbearing ... and encourage husbands and wives to share child care responsibilities.”
Resources	Policy framework (Chinese) (Government, Oct. 28, 2024)
China (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Guidance on calculating average working days</p> <p>China’s Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security has published a circular on how the number of annual working days must be calculated following the increase in statutory paid public holidays. From 2025, employees are entitled to 13 statutory holidays per year, up from 11.</p> <p>The number of annual working days is now 248 days, with an average of 62 working days per quarter and 20.67 working days per month. The formulas used to calculate daily and hourly salaries remain unchanged, and the number of “monthly payroll days” remains at 21.75 days.</p>
Resources	Circular (Chinese) (Government, Jan. 1, 2025)

China (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preferential taxation policy for expatriates expanded — key date: Dec. 31, 2027 Preferential taxation policy for annual one-time bonus extended — key date: Dec. 31, 2027
Hong Kong (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum wage to increase — key date: May 1, 2025 Corporate governance code and listing rules revised, diversity enhanced — key date: July 1, 2025 Statutory minimum wage to be reviewed annually — key date: January 2025 Number of statutory holidays increased — key date: 2026 Wealth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory pension fund offsetting to end — key date: May 2025
India (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career — Health — Wealth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor and employment laws reformed — key date: effective date delayed
Indonesia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	Career <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of public housing savings program, contributions and registration issued — key date: May 20, 2027
Japan (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	Health <p>Unemployment insurance contribution rates reduced</p> <p>Reduced unemployment insurance contribution rates took effect on April 1, 2025. The employee contribution rate is 0.55%, down from 0.6%, and the employer contribution rate is 0.9%, down from 0.95%</p>
Resources	Announcement (Japanese) (Ministry of Health Labor and Welfare)

Japan (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Employers have to offer flexible working arrangements</p> <p>Employers in Japan have to offer flexible working arrangements to employees who care for young children aged three years or older under measures included in amendments to the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act and the Development of the Next Generation Children Act. The provisions generally took effect on April 1, 2025, but some measures will be phased-in. Highlights of the measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees with children younger than age six are exempt from overtime work — up from age three. • Child nursing care leave is expanded to all employees with children up to the third year of primary/elementary school (up from age three), regardless of the employees' length of service. The leave can be used to care for children or family members who are sick from April 1 forward and can be used to cover school events that require the parents' attendance. • Flexible work options include adjustment of the employee's start time, reduced working hours, provision of extra leave, teleworking, and other measures that would support employees with their child care. • Employers have to inform eligible employees about the flexible working options available to them and their leave entitlement, accept their selection and ask them how the employer can help them balance work and child care. • Employers with more than 300 employees must disclose the uptake of parental leave by male employees (currently, the disclosure duty only applies to companies with more than 1,000 employees). Employers with more than 100 employees have to set numerical targets aimed at improving the uptake of parental leave by men. • Employers must provide employees aged 40 and older with information about public programs that could support combining continued employment with elder care.
Resources	yukiko.sanjo@mercer.com Information on the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act (Japanese) (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare)
Japan (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Postnatal leave support benefit introduced</p> <p>From April 1, 2025, "Postnatal Leave Support Benefit" (paid leave) of up to 28 days was introduced for eligible parents. The paid leave is additional to the "Childcare Leave Benefit" on the birth of a child, provided that both parents take child care leave for 14 days or more after the birth of their child, or the expected birth date. The measures aim to encourage dual income families and co-parenting and they amend the Employment Insurance Act. Eligible individuals will receive a benefit of 80% calculated on their daily wage during the six months prior to the start of the leave (salary x the number of days of leave period x 13%).</p>
Resources	yukiko.sanjo@mercer.com Announcement (Japanese) (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare)

Japan (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Continued employment for some older workers mandated**

From April 1, 2025, all employers that specify a retirement age younger than age 65 must allow employees to continue working until age 65. Employers have to either increase the retirement age, abolish the retirement age, or rehire employees or extend employment for employees until age 65 for individuals who want to continue working. Employers are already encouraged (but not mandated) to expand employment opportunities for employees between the age of 65 and 70 under measures included in the Act on Stabilization of Employment of Elderly Persons that took effect on April 1, 2021.

Resourcesyukiko.sanjo@mercer.com[Announcement](#) (Japanese) (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare)**Malaysia (previously covered with upcoming effective dates)****Development****Career**

- [Progressive wage policy to be implemented](#) — key date: expected in 2025

New Zealand (new)**Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Minimum wage increased**

From April 1, 2025, the adult hourly minimum wage increased to NZ\$23.50, up from NZ \$23.15, for workers aged 16 years or older. The new hire and training minimum wage is NZ\$18.80, up from NZ\$18.52.

Resources[Minimum wage order 2025](#) (Government, Feb. 24, 2025)**New Zealand (new)****Status**  **Currently effective****Development****Career****Protection against wage theft strengthened**

Employees who are victims of wage theft by their employers are now entitled to greater protection under measures included in The Crimes (Theft by Employer) Amendment Act 2025 that received royal assent and took effect on March 13, 2025. Employers that fail to pay employees their wages, and particular statutory entitlements, commit theft where the failure is intentional and without a reasonable excuse.

Previously, employers that underpaid, or withheld wages from their employees faced prosecutions by the labor inspectorate and the payment of penalties. However, the new Act includes the potential for financial and criminal sanctions for wage theft (up to seven years if the value exceeds NZ\$1,000).

Resources[Crimes \(theft by employer\) Amendment Act 2025](#) (Government, March 13, 2025)

Singapore (new)

Status



Effective dates vary.

Development

Career

Work permit schemes to be revised

On March 6, 2025, Singapore's Minister of Manpower announced changes to its foreign worker schemes that aim to balance the country's need to employ foreign workers with improved skilled job opportunities for Singaporean employees. Highlights include:

- From Sept. 1, 2025, the minimum qualifying salary for new S Pass applications will increase to SG\$3,300, up from SG\$3,150, and the minimum qualifying salary in the financial sector will be SG\$3,800, up from SG\$3,650. The new rate will apply to S Pass renewals from Sept. 1, 2026. The government will continue to review the S Pass qualifying salary against the benchmark given prevailing economic conditions.
- The S Pass levy rate will be standardized at SG\$650 from Sept. 1, 2025.
- The current maximum employment period for permit holders will be removed, and the maximum employment age of Work Permit Holders will be aligned with the local retirement age (currently 63).
- Employers in the services and manufacturing sectors will be allowed to hire skilled employees from nontraditional sources.
- From May 1, 2025, the Manpower for Strategic Economic Priorities Scheme (M SEP scheme) will be expanded to better support firms that contribute to Singapore's strategic economic priorities and local workforce development. A new scheme will be introduced to support employers that send Singaporean employees on leadership programs or overseas.

Resources

[Speech](#) (Ministry of Manpower, March 6, 2025)

Singapore (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Government boosts cofunding of low wage schemes

On Feb. 18, 2025, Singapore's government announced co-funding increases for its Progressive Wage Credit Scheme (PWCS) that provides employers with transitional wage support to increase the wages of eligible lower-wage workers. The government's co-funding will increase to 40% (up from 30%) for wage increases awarded in the qualifying year 2025 (or that are awarded in 2024 and continued in 2025), and to 20% (up from 15%) for wage increases awarded in 2026 (or that are awarded in 2025 and continued in 2026).

The PWCS co-fund increases wages for eligible resident employees from 2022 to 2026. Employers do not need to apply for the PWCS and receive the payment for the respective year by the first quarter of the following year.

Resources

[Progressive wage credit scheme](#) (Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, Feb. 18, 2025)

Singapore (previously covered, now effective)

Status



Phase-in began April 1, 2025.

Development

Career — Health

Shared parental leave entitlement, mandatory paternity leave now effective

Parents in Singapore are entitled to a total of 30 weeks of paid leave under changes that are phased in from April 1, 2025, and employers must grant four weeks of mandatory paternity leave. The measures were announced during the National Day Rally on August 18, 2024, and passed parliament on Nov. 13, 2024. Highlights of the new scheme:

- From April 1, 2025, six weeks of paid shared leave is to be divided equally between the parents (subject to meeting eligibility criteria), increasing to 10 weeks on April 1, 2026. The leave entitlement can be reallocated between the parents within four weeks of the child's birth; any changes after this period require mutual agreement between the parents and employers. The child must be a Singapore national or become a Singapore citizen within 12 months of their birth.
- The shared leave is additional to 16 weeks of maternity leave. It must be taken within 12 months of the child's birth and in one block, unless otherwise agreed to between the employer and employee.
- The government payment for shared leave is capped at SG\$2,500 per week.
- From April 1, 2025, employers have to grant four weeks of government-paid mandatory paternity leave to fathers for children born on or after this date. Currently fathers are entitled to two weeks of government-paid paternity leave, and they can take an additional two weeks on a voluntary basis that is reimbursed by the government.
- Employees must notify their employers at least four weeks before taking leave under any scheme.
- Employers can check their employees' leave sharing arrangement via the Ministry of Social and Family Development from April 1, 2025.

Resources

[Amendments to Child Development Co-Savings Act: Enhanced paternity leave and new shared parental leave scheme from April 1, 2025 to strengthen support for working parents](#) (Ministry of Social and Family Development, Nov. 13, 2024)

Singapore (previously covered with upcoming effective dates)

Development

Career

- [First workplace fairness bill passes parliament](#) — key date: 2026 or 2027

Career — Wealth

- [Retirement and reemployment ages to increase](#) — key date: July 1, 2026

Wealth

- [Central Provident Fund contribution rates for older workers to increase](#) — key date: Beginning in 2026

South Korea (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

- [Sanctions against employers habitually in wage arrears introduced](#) — key date: Oct. 23, 2025

Taiwan (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Wealth

- [Employees and employers can negotiate post-retirement age employment](#) — key date: unknown

Vietnam (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Wealth

- [Social insurance law revised](#) — key date: Effective July 1, 2025

Section 5

Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)

EU (previously covered, with upcoming effective dates)

Development

Career

- [Law approved to improve gender balance on company boards](#) — key date: June 30, 2026
- [Corporate sustainability, human rights due diligence directive finalized](#) — key date: July 26, 2026
- [Ban on forced or child labor finalized](#) — key date: Dec. 14, 2027

Career — Health

- [Platform Worker's Directive moves forward](#) — key date: Dec. 2, 2026

Career — Health — Wealth

- [Pay transparency law must be transposed into national law](#) — key date: June 7, 2026

Belgium (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Minimum wage increased

Increased monthly and hourly minimum wage rates were published on Feb. 27, 2025, and are backdated to Feb. 1, 2025. The monthly rate increased to €2,111.89, up from €2,070.48. The hourly rates are from €12.184 to €12.8252 (up from €11.9451 to €12.5738), depending on the number of hours worked each week.

Resources




[Law](#) (French) (Government, Feb. 27, 2025)



Belgium (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)


Development

Wealth

- [Blue- and white-collar pension harmonization postponed](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2027
- [Federal government agrees on pension reforms](#) — key date: Jan. 1, 2028

Czech Republic (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Sickness insurance increases for employees under agreements to perform work</p> <p>From Jan. 1, 2025, the earnings threshold that requires employees working under agreements to perform work (DPP) to pay social security and health insurance contributions is 25% of the national average wage — 11,500 CZK for 2025. The measure was introduced in the amended Sickness Insurance Act, and the threshold will be adjusted annually. Previously, employers and employees paid social security and health insurance contributions for the months in which DPP income exceeded 10,000 CZK.</p> <p>In 2024, employers were required to register DPP employees, regardless of their earnings. Previously, employers only had to register DPP employees who earned more than 10,000 CZK/month.</p>
Resources	Law (Czech) (Government, Oct. 29, 2024)
Channel Islands — Jersey (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Minimum wage increased</p> <p>The hourly minimum wage increased to £13 on April 1, 2025. The amounts attributable to in-kind employer benefits is £194.60/week, or £27.80/day, if the employer provides food and living accommodation, and £146.02/week, or £20.86/day, if the employer only provides living accommodation.</p>
Resources	Employment (Minimum Wage) (Jersey) Amendment Order 2024 (Legal Information Board, Dec. 19, 2024)
France (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New gender quotas imposed for senior execs/management teams — key date: March 1, 2026
Germany (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum wage increase for cleaners — key date: 2026
Greece (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Minimum wage to increase</p> <p>Effective April 1, 2025, the monthly minimum wage increased to €880 (up from €830), and the daily wage minimum wage for manual workers is €39.30 (up from €37.07). The increase benefits more than 1.6 million individuals, including 575,000 employees in the private sector, those receiving benefits linked to the minimum wage — such as maternity, parental leave, unemployment, and marriage benefits — and for the first time, all public employees.</p>
Resources	maria.markopoulou@marsh.com Minimum wage (Ministry of Labor and Social Security)

Greece (new)	
Status	 Effective date unknown.
Development	<p>Career — Health — Wealth</p> <p>Significant reduction in social security contributions planned for overtime, night shifts, and holidays</p> <p>On Feb. 20, 2025, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security announced measures to significantly reduce social security contributions for overtime, night work, and work on holidays or Sundays for full-time employees. Calculations will be based on the hourly wage that corresponds to an eight-hour workday and will not include any additional pay. The measures were submitted to parliament for approval on Feb. 26, 2025.</p> <p>Additional pay for employees who perform overtime, night work and who work on holidays and Sundays is unchanged and will continue to be paid. The change means that employees will receive increased net pay due to the reduction in their additional contributions, and employers will pay reduced employer contributions.</p>
Resources	<p>maria.markopoulou@marsh.com</p> <p>Announcement (Greek) (Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Feb. 20, 2025)</p>
Hungary (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Health</p> <p>Vision test required for certain employees</p> <p>From Sept. 1, 2024, employers are no longer required to conduct compulsory medical suitability assessments before their employees start their job. However, some occupations/roles will still require a medical suitability assessment to determine an employee's fitness for work, and employers could still choose to require a medical examination.</p> <p>Under law 50/1999, employers must ensure that an occupational physician examines the vision of employees who perform a minimum of four hours of screen-based work, prior to the start of their employment. The examination must be repeated every two years if the employee suffers a visual complaint that can be linked to screen-based work.</p> <p>However, certain jobs that require employees to use or operate machinery or equipment are excluded from the vision test requirement. The excluded jobs include drivers or operators in cabs of vehicles or machinery; computer systems used on different modes of transportation; computer systems intended primarily for public use; portable systems that are not used permanently at the workplace; calculating machines, cash registers and other devices with a small screen displaying data or measurements for their direct use; and conventional electronic typewriters (window typewriters).</p>
Resources	<p>tamas.fekete@mercermarshbenefits.com</p> <p>Law 50/1999 (Hungarian)</p>

Hungary (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Housing allowance introduced for eligible employees</p> <p>Effective Jan. 1, 2025, Hungary introduced a housing allowance fringe benefit for employees who are younger than age 35. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers may grant the housing allowance to pay the rent of a dwelling or to repay a housing loan. Employees must provide the rental or loan contract to the employer when applying for the allowance. Employers pay tax and social contributions on the housing allowance. • Housing allowances may be granted as a fringe benefit of up to 1.8 million HUF per year, if the employee's employment is for the whole year. For periods of less than one full tax year, the allowance is paid pro rata for number of days of employment. • Housing allowances are adjusted for employees who turn age 35 during the tax year. The amount of housing allowance is equal to one twelfth of 1.8 million HUF for each month in which the employee is younger than 35; the month in which the employee turns 35 is the final month that can be taken into account. If the amount of housing benefit paid to an employee exceeds the housing allowance, the benefit is taxable as a specific benefit. • If the amount of the housing allowance claimed by the employee in the tax year exceeds the amount certified as having been paid as rent or loan repayments, 50% of the excess amount must be declared as a differential penalty on the employee's personal income tax return for the tax year and paid as personal income tax.
Resources	<p>tamas.fekete@mercermarshbenefits.com</p> <p>Announcement (Hungarian) (Government, Jan. 14, 2025)</p>
Hungary (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax-exemption scheme for working mothers announced — key date: October 2025
Ireland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career — Health — Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage threshold for PRSI contributions to increase — key date: Oct. 1, 2025 <p>Wealth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension-related issues included in Finance Bill — key date: Jan. 1, 2026 • More details on Auto Enrolment scheme published — key date: Sept. 20, 2025

Kenya (new)**Status****Currently effective****Development****Wealth****Permitted pension contributions increased**

Kenya has increased the permitted combined employer and employee contributions made to registered pension funds, provident funds and individual retirement funds to 360,000 KES/year (30,000 KES/month), up from 240,000 KES/year (20,000 KES/month). Employers should ensure that their payroll systems are updated to include the increased tax deductible contributions. The measures are included in Tax Laws (Amendment) Act 2024 and took effect on Dec. 27, 2024.

Resources

[Tax Laws \(Amendment\) Act 2024](#) (Gazette, Dec. 13, 2024)

Netherlands (updated)**Status****Changes are under consideration.****Development****Wealth****Updates on occupational pension reforms**



On May 30, 2023, the Dutch senate agreed on significant reforms to the occupational pension system that implements the government and social partners' agreement in 2019. The new Pensions Future Act (Wet Toekomst Pensioenen) took effect on July 1, 2023, and abolishes defined benefit (DB) schemes. From Jan. 1, 2027, only defined contribution (DC) schemes will be allowed with fixed (non-age-related) contribution rate. However, certain details of the reforms are still under discussion. For example, the DB abolition date could be pushed back to Jan. 1, 2028, and the date for submitting the implementation and communication plan — currently slated for July 1, 2025 — is unconfirmed.

Resources

pavel.der.kinderen@mercer.com
[Pensions Act](#) (Dutch) (Parliament) and [Information on the reforms](#) (Dutch) (Government)

Oman (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)**Development****Career — Health**

- [Social protection for foreign employees expanded](#) — key date: July 2025

Poland (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career — Health</p> <p>Parents now entitled to paid neonatal leave</p> <p>Parents in Poland are now entitled to paid neonatal leave if their child is born prematurely, or their newborn baby requires hospitalization. The new leave took effect on March 19, 2025, and amends the labor code. Highlights of the measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers, fathers, legal guardians, adoptive parents and foster families are eligible for neonatal leave. Employees must submit a request to their employer to take the new leave no later than 21 days before the end of their maternity leave and provide a medical certificate with the necessary information. Neonatal leave must be taken in one continuous period and is paid under the maternity allowance regulations. • For births that occur before the 28th week of pregnancy, or where the baby's birth weight is less than 1,000g, eligible individuals can take one week for each week the child is hospitalized, capped at 15 weeks. • For births that occur between the 28th and the 37th week of pregnancy, and where the baby's birth weight exceeds 1,000g, eligible individuals can take one week of for each week the child is hospitalized, capped at eight weeks. • For births that occur after the 37th week of pregnancy, and where the hospitalization is at least two days between the fifth and 28th day following the birth, eligible individuals can take one week of leave for each week the child is hospitalized, capped at eight weeks. • Employees taking neonatal leave are protected from dismissal and entitled to return to their previous role, or an equivalent position. • Employees who were on maternity leave on March 19, 2025, can also apply for neonatal leave no later than the last day of their maternity leave.
Resources	Law (Polish) (Government, March 19, 2025)
Poland (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>New public holiday designated from 2025</p> <p>Starting in 2025, Poland has designated Christmas Eve (Dec. 24) as a public holiday. In addition, trade/shopping are allowed on the three (up from two) Sundays preceding Christmas Eve.</p>
Resources	Law (Polish) (Government, Dec. 30, 2025)
Qatar (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)	
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Nationalization program launched to boost employment rate — key date: unknown</p>

Saudi Arabia (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

- [Revised national hiring targets for certain sectors issued](#) — key date: July 27, 2025

South Africa (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Earnings threshold increased

Effective April 1, 2025, the earnings threshold (threshold) in South Africa will increase to 261,748.45 SAR/year (up from 254,371.67 SAR/year), or 21,812.37 SAR/month (up from 21,197.63 SAR/month).

Earnings include an employee's regular annual remuneration before income tax deductions, retirement fund contributions, medical scheme contributions and "similar payments." Employer contributions, subsistence and transport allowances, achievement awards and overtime payments are excluded.

The threshold provides greater protection to employees whose earnings are below the threshold (for example, sections of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act that regulate ordinary hours of work, overtime, meal intervals, daily and weekly rest periods, Sunday pay, night work pay, and public holiday pay will apply to such workers). The increased threshold will expand the number of employees entitled to such protection under the legislation, including overtime pay.

Resources

[Law](#) (Government Gazette, March 6, 2025)

South Africa (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

- [Expanded remuneration and pay gap disclosures required](#) — key date: Upon proclamation

Spain (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Health

- [New paid family leave entitlement](#) — key date: unknown

Sweden (new)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career — Health

Employers must report employees' absence due to parental and sick child care leave

From Jan. 1, 2025, employers in Sweden must now inform the Swedish Tax Agency when employees take parental leave and leave to care for a sick child. This requirement was introduced to prevent fraud related to employees receiving the parental benefit or temporary parental benefit. Employers must include the information when submitting pay-as-you-earn tax returns, and they must notify the employee that they have done so.

Resources

[Information on filing a PAYE return](#) (Skatterverket)

Sweden (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Wealth

- [Flexibility of receiving occupational pension benefit payments increased](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025

Switzerland (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Health

- [Paid parental leave introduced in Geneva](#) — key date: unknown

United Arab Emirates — Abu Dhabi Global Market (previously covered, now effective)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career

Revised employment terms apply

From April 1, 2025, employees' rights are strengthened and employers' obligations clarified in the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) under measures that aim "to foster best employment practices." The measures follow an earlier consultation and are included in the Employment Regulations 2024 ('regulations') that replace Employment Regulations 2019. Highlights of the regulations include:

- Written employment contracts must be in English and signed by both parties within one month of the start date
- Employees must consent in writing to overtime work
- 25% working time reduction for Muslim employees during Ramadan
- Entitlement to unpaid sick leave for new hires during their six-month probation period
- Leave for parents who adopt a child younger than five
- Anti-victimization measures that incorporate a definition of victimization, protected acts and legal remedies for employees
- Vicarious liability for employers in the event of certain acts, including discrimination, harassment and victimization
- More detailed provisions about termination and the end of service gratuity payment (for example, the gratuity is payable to all employees with at least one year of service). Employees can still participate in a pension or savings scheme as an alternative.
- Employees must confirm they have received independent legal advice before concluding a settlement agreement.
- Amended definition of "employee" to allow the hiring of remote employees, and more flexible working arrangements
- Clarification of employee entitlements, including those for part-time employees
- Clarification about the obtaining and cancellation of an employee's work permit and visa.

Resources




[ADGM publishes new employment regulations](#) (ADGM, Jan. 9, 2025)

United Arab Emirates (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career

- [Flexibility of receiving occupational pension benefit payments increased](#) — key date: Oct. 1, 2025

United Kingdom (UK) (new)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>Financial regulators will not move forward on diversity and inclusion proposals</p> <p>The UK's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) announced that they will not issue new regulatory proposals on diversity and inclusion in their response to their September 2023 consultations on a new regulatory framework to boost diversity and inclusion in the financial sector. However, the regulators will continue to support voluntary initiatives.</p> <p>The regulators confirmed that they should avoid duplication and adding unnecessary costs to industry, and initiatives should align with the government's wider employment rights agenda, including the proposed gender action plans and ethnicity pay gap reporting. In March 2024, the House of Commons Treasury Committee Report on Sexism in the City opposed the regulators' proposals on data gathering and reporting requirements, saying that company "boards and senior leadership of firms should take greater responsibility for improving diversity and inclusion given that it should lead to a competitive advantage in the development of talent."</p>
Resources	Letter to Chair of Treasury Committee (Prudential Regulation Authority, March 11, 2025)
UK (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Wealth</p> <p>National Insurance contributions increased</p> <p>Effective April 6, 2025, employers must pay increased National Insurance Contributions (NICs) of 15%, up from 13.8%, and the salary threshold at which employers start paying NICs for their staff is reduced to £5,000, down from £9,100. However, smaller businesses do not have to pay any NICs on annual salaries of less than £10,500 because the "employment allowance" has more than doubled from £5,000 currently. It is estimated that 850,000 smaller employers will pay no NICs.</p> <p>The NIC changes are expected to raise £23.7 billion for the government by the end of the forecast period — 2029/2030 — of the Office for Budget Responsibility.</p>
Resources	Autumn Budget 2024 (HM Treasury, Oct. 30, 2024) and Autumn Budget 2024: A summary (Government, Oct. 31, 2024)
UK (previously covered, now effective)	
Status	 Currently effective
Development	<p>Career</p> <p>National minimum wage rates increased</p> <p>Effective April 1, 2025, the top rate of the national minimum wage (the National Living Wage) increased by 6.7% to £12.21/hour, up from £11.44/hour, and is payable to all staff aged 21 years and older.</p> <p>The minimum wage for individuals aged 18 to 20 years increased by 16.3% to £10/hour, up from £8.60/hour, and it will increase again until it is the same as the National Living Wage. The rate for individuals younger than 18 and for apprentices is £7.55/hour, up from £6.40/hour.</p>
Resources	Autumn Budget 2024 (HM Treasury, Oct. 30, 2024) and Autumn Budget 2024: A summary (Government, Oct. 31, 2024)

UK (previously covered, now effective)

Status



Currently effective

Development

Career — Health

Employees allowed neonatal leave

Employed parents with babies up to age 28 days who are admitted to a hospital for seven days or more have the right to neonatal leave of up to 12 weeks under measures included in the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act, which received Royal Assent on May 24, 2023. The measures took effect on April 6, 2025, and apply to children born on or after that date. Draft regulations were presented to parliament on Jan. 20, 2025. Further guidance will be published by the government and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). Highlights include:

- Employees are entitled to neonatal leave from the first day of employment. Employees with 26 weeks of service and earning more than the lower earnings limit are entitled to statutory neonatal pay.
- Neonatal leave is capped at 12 weeks, including for multiple births, and will be added at the end of other leave entitlements (such as maternity, paternity and statutory parental leaves), provided it is taken within 68 weeks of birth.
- Neonatal care is defined as medical care in a hospital, or in another place to which the child is moved after leaving the hospital, subject to a consultant directing the child's medical care; it also includes ongoing monitoring by, and visits from, healthcare professionals arranged by that hospital and palliative or end-of-life care.
- Two different types of neonatal leave are allowed. "Tier one" leave can be taken when the child is in neonatal care, or up to seven days after the end of such care, in nonconsecutive blocks of a minimum of one week. "Tier two" leave must be taken in one continuous block.
- Employees must notify their employer that they will take leave and provide certain information. Different notice periods apply to "tier one" and "tier two" leave, although the employer and employee can agree to waive the notice requirements.
- Employees who take neonatal care leave are entitled to the same protections that apply to other periods of family-related leave.

Resources

[Guidance](#) (Acas, April 2, 2025); [The neonatal care leave and miscellaneous amendments regulations 2025](#) (Government, Jan. 20, 2025); [Neonatal Care \(Leave and Pay\) Act 2023](#) (Legislature) and [Workers' rights wins for parents and careers](#) (Government, May 25, 2023)

UK (new)

Status



Consultation is open through June 10, 2025.

Development

Career

Consultation on introduction of compulsory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting

The UK government has issued a consultation on the introduction of compulsory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting for large employers with 250 or more employees that would eventually be included in Equality (Race and Disability) Bill. Comments are invited through June 10, 2025. The government is also seeking views on imposing additional reporting criteria for public sector bodies. The UK introduced voluntary ethnicity pay gap reporting guidance in 2023. Gender pay gap reporting was introduced in the UK in 2017. Highlights of the consultation:

- Employers would have to ask employees to report their own ethnicity using the government's ethnicity harmonized standard. A minimum of 10 employees would have to be included in each ethnic group to be analyzed to preserve employee privacy. Employers would be allowed to aggregate different ethnic groups to achieve the minimum threshold, and they would have to follow the Office for National Statistics guidance on ethnicity data.
- Employees would self-identify as disabled — employees would not be compelled to identify or disclose their disability. A binary approach would measure the disability pay gap, comparing employees that have a disability with employees who do not (with at least 10 employees in each comparison group). Employers would collect disability data using the disability definition in the Equality Act 2010.
- The reporting dates, online reporting requirements and enforcement regime through the Equality and Human Rights Commission would be the same as already required for gender pay gap reporting. Employers would have to report on the same six set of pay gap measures (mean differences in average hourly pay; median differences in average hourly pay; pay quarters; mean differences in bonus pay; median differences in bonus pay; and the percentage of employees of the relevant protected characteristic that receive bonus pay).
- Employers would also have to report on the breakdown of their workforce by ethnicity and disability and the percentage of employees who did not disclose their ethnicity and disability.

Resources

[Equality \(race and disability\) bill: Mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting](#) (Government, March 18, 2025)

UK (previously covered, now effective)

Status  **Deadline for largest schemes is April 30, 2025.**

Development

Wealth

Largest pension schemes face deadline to connect to new Pensions Dashboards

The Pensions Dashboard regulations set a single mandatory connection date of Oct. 31, 2026, by which pension schemes must connect to the Pension Dashboards ecosystem.

However, the regulations require trustees and managers of pension schemes to “have regard” to the Department for Work and Pensions guidance issued on March 25, 2024. The guidance includes a phased timetable for pension schemes to connect. The largest schemes should connect on April 30, 2025, and the smallest schemes (with 100–124 members) should join by Sept. 30, 2026. Connection for pension schemes with fewer than 100 members is not yet mandatory.

In practice, schemes should consider that their deadline for doing so will be the staging dates included in the guidance, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Resources

richard.wyatt@mercer.com

[Pensions dashboards: Guidance on connection: The staged timetable](#) (Department for Work & Pensions, March 25, 2024)

UK (previously covered, with upcoming effective date)

Development

Career — Health

- [Paternity leave to be expanded to bereaved partners](#) — key date: unknown
- [Benefits-in-kind digitization reporting confirmed](#) — key date: April 2026

Wealth

- [Pension auto enrollment to expand, reducing eligible age and abolishing earnings threshold](#) — key date: unknown



Mercer LLC

1166 Avenue of the Americas

New York, NY 10036

www.mercer.com

© 2025 Mercer LLC. All rights reserved.