

EQUALITY AT WORK AND IN BUSINESS

SHEET 1 OF 5

SALARY: FAIR AND JUST TREATMENT

When determining staff salaries, employers must respect two main principles:

- **Equal pay for work of equal value.** Men and women with the same skills and comparable work experience must receive the same salary and enjoy the same working conditions in carrying out their tasks. This principle is enshrined in the Québec [Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms](#).
- **Equal pay for work of equivalent value.** The employer must pay an equal salary not only for work of equal value but also for work of equivalent value, in accordance with the principle of pay equity. In applying this principle, the employer compares female and male job classes based on [pre-established criteria](#). If the comparison reveals discrepancies, the employer adjusts the salaries accordingly. The [Pay Equity Act](#) applies to all companies with 10 or more salaried employees.

BASIC WORKING CONDITIONS (PAY, VACATION)

Various laws have been passed to protect all Québec workers. The [Act respecting labour standards](#) sets the [basic working conditions](#) for all remunerated workers. This law lays the foundations of a universal system of working conditions. It deals, among other things, with salary, vacation and absences as well as job termination notices and the resources available if a remunerated employee lodges a complaint. The working conditions established between employers and their staff must not fall short of what is stipulated in the labour standards.

These standards apply regardless of the type of position a person occupies, be it permanent, temporary or part-time. The same standards also hold for immigrants, whether they are [employed on a temporary or other basis](#) (in French only), and for refugees who are sponsored or waiting for the determination of their status. The [Act respecting labour standards](#) also contains provisions on [work performed by children](#).

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In the case of unionized personnel, the working conditions are governed by collective agreements with the employer. However, collective agreements cannot contain standards inferior to those set out in the [Act respecting labour standards](#) and the Québec [Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms](#).

WORKPLACE: DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Women and men have the right to work in a [safe working environment](#) (in French only). They also have the responsibility to ensure that they do not put themselves in danger and the employer must take whatever measures are required to ensure the safety and physical integrity of their staff.

The workplace must be a safe environment, free of all forms of [discrimination](#) and [harassment](#).

The government oversees compliance with the various obligations pertaining to the establishment of [equal access to employment programs](#) (in French only) in order to fight discrimination in the workplace. These programs are intended particularly for [women and visible and ethnic minorities](#) (in French only). For example, various programs are designed for public service employees (in French only). A [workplace integration measure](#) (in French only) is intended mainly for newly arrived members of visible and ethnic minorities.

Employers must, however, take [reasonable accommodation](#) measures to enable their staff to exercise their rights. Employers could, for example, authorize a day off for a religious holiday, or modify a menu to take dietary restrictions into account.

In Québec, women can hold the same positions as men and carry out tasks comparable to those performed by men. Women can also be in positions of authority.

If you are looking for work, go to the [online placement](#) website of Emploi Québec or consult the [Employment Immigration Program for Immigrants and Visible Minorities](#), which offers opportunities to break into the Québec job market.

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COMPLAINTS

The Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail receives [complaints from employees and employers](#). People file complaints for a variety of reasons, including withheld or seized earnings, employer reprisals, unjustified suspension or firing and psychological harassment in the workplace. The Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse can also receive complaints, particularly if an employer adopts discriminatory behaviour based on any of the grounds for unlawful discrimination named in the Québec [Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms](#), such as language, ethnic origin and religion.

RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY OBLIGATIONS

The State and the workplace have adopted a range of measures to make it possible for people to reconcile [work and family obligations](#).

[Pregnant](#) women may take an unpaid day off for a pregnancy-related examination by a doctor or midwife. The employer must be notified, however, as soon as possible. Moreover, if the workplace presents a risk for the mother or the development of the child, the mother must be assigned other tasks that pose no threats to her or the child's health. If this is not possible, the mother must be preventively withdrawn from the workplace and receive monetary compensation. An employer cannot, for whatever reason, [fire or otherwise punish a woman solely for being pregnant](#).

The [Québec Parental Insurance Plan](#) provides for financial benefits in the following situations: maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave, the last of which can be shared by both parents. [Benefits can be paid](#) for up to 55 weeks, as follows: 18 weeks of maternity leave, 5 weeks of paternity leave and 32 weeks of parental leave. One of the parents may take the total number of weeks, or the parents can divide the weeks between themselves in accordance with an agreement they establish.

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CHILDCARE SERVICES

To support parents, Québec has a [childcare services network](#) and [one-stop access to childcare services](#). These services are offered by early childhood services (CPEs), operators of family daycare centres and private daycares.

Childcare services are open to children from birth to kindergarten. Children attending public kindergarten or elementary school have access to childcare services at their institutions.

Parents who have not been able to find a place for their children in a subsidized childcare service are entitled to a [tax credit](#) to reduce their childcare expenses. They must, however, have an official receipt for the childcare services they use or a receipt provided by the person(s) who provided the services.

Other resources available to parents include [childcare services provided by community organizations](#) (halte-garderies, in French only) and [summer camps](#) (in French only).

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Québec government supports [Entreprendre ici](#) (in French only), an organization for ethnoculturally diverse entrepreneurs. This organization's mission is to offer tailored accompaniment for ethnoculturally diverse entrepreneurs throughout Québec in order to help them carry out their projects.

Moreover, in order to encourage and support women who wish to start, grow or purchase a business, the Québec government supports [Femmessor](#), an organization dedicated to the development of women's entrepreneurship. Femmessor's mission is to contribute directly to the creation, growth, and acquisition of businesses that are owned or operated, in whole or in part, by women across all 17 regions of Quebec. Its [financing services](#), combined with [support](#) tailored to the needs of entrepreneurs, allows Québec women entrepreneurs to build sustainable and prosperous businesses.

Finally, [MicroEntreprendre](#) (in French only) brings together microcredit organizations from many Québec regions. Supported by the Québec government, it provides guidance and funding to clients who have trouble accessing traditional business financing.