Human Resources Legislative Update

Employers Should Plan Now for the April 8 Eclipse

Date: March 25, 2024

On Monday, April 8, 2024, a solar eclipse will be visible in many parts of Eastern Canada. This will be a unique experience, but one that also has the potential to pose a health and safety risk to outdoor workers and any other workers who have work-related reasons to be outdoors at the time of the eclipse, including entering or exiting the employer's premises. Employers should plan now to ensure they take the necessary precautions to protect against this hazard.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (the Ministry) has updated its Working Outdoors site to provide safety information related to the eclipse. It expressly states, "Employers with workers who may be exposed to the sun during the eclipse should instruct workers **not to look at the sun during the eclipse**."

In light of this guidance and the potential hazards posed by the eclipse, an employer with outdoor workers should:

- if possible, adjust break times or rearrange schedules around the eclipse period (2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.) to avoid non-essential outdoor work and outdoor travel during this period
- ensure workers who will be outdoors have appropriate eyewear to protect from potential retinal injury (the Ministry's website provides information about the specific eyewear required)
- educate workers on the potential hazards associated with looking directly at the eclipse without proper eyewear and direct workers not to look at the sun during the eclipse period
- plan for other safety hazards (e.g., limited visibility) that may arise as a result of the eclipse