LEGAL UPDATE

FB ATTORNEYS

18 November 2026



Employment and Labour Regulations Amended

- **New procedure introduced for responding to labour disputes before the CMA**
- **Respondents may file formal replies and counterclaims**
- **New provisions introduced for unpaid leave**
- **Employers and employees required to agree on measures during workplace emergencies**
- **Electronic access to trade union and employers' association registers introduced**
- **Annual financial statements and audit reports to be submitted by 31 March**

Background
The Government has recently issued the Employment and Labour Relations (General) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026 (the Amendment Regulations) vide Government Notice No. 272, amending the Employment and Labour Relations (General) Regulations, 2017. The Amendment Regulations introduce several changes relating to labour dispute procedures, unpaid leave, workplace emergencies and the administration of trade unions and employers' associations.

One of the notable changes is the introduction of CMA Form F.1B, which provides a formal procedure for responding to disputes referred to the Commission for Mediation and Arbitration (CMA). Previously, the Regulations did not expressly provide a prescribed form for respondents to file a written reply to a referral. Under the Amendment Regulations, a respondent may now submit a reply indicating whether the claims are admitted or denied, setting out its position on the dispute and raising a counterclaim, where applicable. Importantly, the filing of a reply is not mandatory, and failure to submit one does not prevent the CMA from proceeding with the matter.

Furthermore, the Amendment Regulations introduce regulation 14A, which provides for unpaid leave. Under this provision, an employee seeking leave without pay must submit a written application to the employer stating the reasons and duration of the leave. Such reasons may include attending studies or training not covered by other leave categories, undergoing further medical treatment after exhausting sick leave entitlement, or circumstances where a female employee is not entitled to maternity leave. Importantly, an employee returning from unpaid leave is entitled to resume work on the same terms and conditions of employment.

In addition, the newly introduced regulation 14B addresses workplace emergencies, including infectious disease outbreaks, natural disasters, accidents and other situations affecting employee safety or workplace operations. In such circumstances, employers are required to immediately notify employees or their representatives and meet with them as soon as practicable to agree on appropriate measures. These may include providing protective equipment, adjusting working hours or shifts, introducing remote working arrangements, or temporarily suspending or scaling down operations.

Interestingly, the Amendment Regulations also introduce electronic access to the register of trade unions, employers' associations, federations and confederations. The register must indicate whether an organisation is active, inactive or deregistered, together with its contact details and the status of submission of financial statements, audit reports and membership lists.

The Amendment Regulations further introduce regulation 32A, requiring the Registrar to affix an official seal or mark on every page of a registered constitution of a trade union or employers' association. Copies or reproductions of such constitutions or rules will only be valid if certified by the Registrar.

It is also worth noting that the newly introduced regulation 32B requires trade unions, employers' associations and federations to submit their financial statements and auditor's reports to the Registrar by 31 March of the following year. The submissions must be accompanied by a covering letter and membership list. Where any required document is missing, the Registrar must require its submission within seven days. Failure by a trade union or employers' association to comply with this requirement constitutes an offence.

Lastly, the Amendment Regulations introduce and revise several statutory forms relating to the registration and administration of trade unions and employers' associations, as well as proceedings before the CMA.

To read the Employment and Labour Relations (General) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026, click here.

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