



“Employment law all-rounder who handles every issue with sensitivity and skill.”

Maria Tassou

Partner

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 289.805.1956

 Email

Maria Tassou’s practice focuses on employment law, administrative law, workplace investigations, management training, and privacy law.

She regularly advises clients on a wide range of employment-related issues, including terminations, disciplinary matters, sexual harassment, human rights concerns, employment contracts, restrictive covenants, and workplace policies.

Maria delivers customized management seminars and training programs to leadership teams, management, and staff on employment-related topics. To protect businesses from potential liability, she also conducts privacy and policy audits to ensure they comply with workplace laws and engage in best management practices.

As a certified workplace investigator, Maria can be retained as an impartial, third-party investigator to conduct efficient, sensitive, and objective investigations into workplace misconduct. These include breaches of workplace policy, allegations of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or discrimination. She is also available to provide legal advice and guidance to employers and human resources professionals conducting their own internal investigations.

With extensive experience as a civil litigator and adjudicator, Maria presided over hearings involving a broad range of matters in both the private and public sector.

For five years she was the chair and lead adjudicator of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, an adjudicative tribunal. She was also a vice-chair of several other tribunals in Ontario, including the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, Landlord Tenant Board, Social Benefits Tribunal, and Licence Appeal Tribunal.

As a seasoned adjudicator, Maria has wide-ranging experience eliciting evidence, questioning parties, maintaining confidentiality, and protecting the privacy interests of all parties. She has adjudicated a multitude of claims involving criminal harassment, sexual assault, physical violence, threats, internet crimes, and human trafficking in a fair and impartial manner.

Maria understands the importance of procedural fairness and natural justice. Respectful of social and cultural differences, she acts in a manner that promotes an appreciation for diversity. She has engaged in meaningful outreach and public consultations

strengthening stakeholder relations among government agencies, police services, advocacy organizations and the Ombudsman's office.

She also has experience protecting personal and sensitive information and dealing with third-party requests for information as the designated head of an institution pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Furthermore, Maria serves as Privacy Officer for the firm. She also heads the Student Committee and the AODA Committee, served as a member of the firm's Diversity Committee and has co-chaired the PV Women's Network.

Expertise

- Commercial Litigation
- Employment and Labour
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (Arbitration & Mediation)
- Constructive Dismissal
- Employment Litigation
- Executive Compensation
- Harassment and Discrimination
- Health and Safety Policies and Procedures
- Human Rights Matters
- Management Training
- Mediations
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy Law and Audits
- Reprisals and Reinstatements
- Temporary Layoffs
- Warnings and Progressive Discipline
- Workplace Accommodation
- Workplace Audits
- Workplace Investigations
- Workplace Policies and Procedures Development and Review (including Employee Handbooks)

Industries

- Construction
- Education
- Food and Beverage
- Healthcare
- Transportation/Logistics
- Travel and Hospitality

- Manufacturing
- Telecommunication
- Wholesale and Retail Services

Education

LL.B., Osgoode Hall Law School (1996)
Specialist of Management Program, University of Toronto (1990-1993)

Called to the Ontario Bar, 1998

Awards

- Best Lawyers™ Accolades for Eleven Pallett Valo Lawyers

Memberships

- Member, Law Society of Ontario
- Member, Canadian Bar Association
- Member, Ontario Bar Association
- Member, International Society of Female Professionals
- Member, Institute of Public Administration of Canada
- Member, Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators
- Member, Association of Workplace Investigators
- Member, Canadian Italian Advocates Organization
- Professional Member, International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP)
- Member, Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA)
- Past Director, Kerry's Place
- Past Member, National Joint Committee of Senior Criminal Justice Officials
- Past Member, SOAR Education Committee for Adjudicators
- Past Member, Toronto Police Service Victim Witness Support Advisory Committee
- Past Member, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Victim Subcommittee
- Past Member, HALC Trans Legal Needs Committee

Publications

- Pallett Valo Welcomes Six Partners January 2024
- Pallett Valo's Employment Law Group Is Expanding Its Service Offerings February 2020
- More Mandatory Policies for Ontario Employers March 2022
- \$30,000 Award for Misuse of Gender Pronouns November 2021
- Employers Could be Held Liable for Improper Use of Pronouns in the Workplace October 2021

- Briggs & Stratton Acquires Equity in Accelerated Systems, Inc. July 2021
- Federally Regulated Employers Must Comply With New Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Laws April 2021
- Mandatory Mask Policies and Human Rights April 2021
- Pallett Valo's Maria Tassou on OMNI Television March 2021
- Employer Held Liable for Shoddy Workplace Investigation December 2020
- Employers in Peel Must Comply With Peel Public Health Order December 2020
- Mandatory COVID Screening in Workplaces October 2020
- CERB Program Extended as Economy Reopens Gradually June 2020
- Provincial Government Update and Guidelines for Employers to Follow as Workplaces Reopen May 2020
- Update for Ontario Employers Regarding Recent COVID-19 Developments – April 3, 2020 April 2020
- COVID-19 Update for Employers – March 23, 2020 March 2020
- Mitigating Privacy Risks for Teleworkers January 2020
- Important AODA Deadlines to Keep in Mind November 2019
- PIPEDA – Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Businesses One Year after Introduction of Mandatory Breach Reporting November 2019
- What Do Employers Need to Know About Cannabis Edibles in the Workplace? November 2019
- Maria Tassou Joins Pallett Valo as Senior Counsel September 2019
- Administrative Lawyer Rejoins Pallett Valo as Senior Counsel September 2019
- Pallett Valo Extends a Hearty Welcome Back to Maria Tassou September 2019

Other Languages

- Italian

Other Publications and Presentations

- Moderator, Workplace Mental Health: Building a Culture of Wellness, Canadian Lawyer Employment Law Masterclass – April 2022
- Presenter, Navigating Employment Law in a 2021 COVID Environment, HRPAA Peel Chapter PD Day – February 2021
- Presenter, Be Mindful of the Mind: Managing Employee Mental Health Challenges, Pallett Valo – November 2020
- Presenter, What You Say Can Hurt You: Best Practices Governing Social Media at Work, Pallett Valo – October 2020
- Presenter, COVID-19 Employment Related Issues for Employers, Pallett Valo – September 2020
- Presenter, Not the Place to Get Buzzed: Cannabis in the Workplace, Pallett Valo – January 2020
- Speaker, Stay ahead of the Law: Important HR Legislative and Case Law Updates, HRPAA Peel Chapter PD Day
- Panelist, Advice for Appearing before Tribunals, Ontario Bar Association
- Panelist, Fairness, Mental Health and Administrative Process, Osgoode Symposium
- Speaker, Effective Time Management Strategies for Adjudicators
- Speaker, Electronic Hearing Briefs, Going Paperless
- Panelist, Compassion Fatigue, SOAR's 29th Annual Conference for Adjudicators

- Speaker, Presentation to Sexual Violence Advisory Group of Crown Attorneys
- Panelist, Administrative Law Practice Basics, Law Society of Upper Canada
- Panelist, The View from the Chair, Association of Law Officers of the Crown
- Speaker, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Accessing Police Records
- Speaker, Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, Education re Tribunal Hearings
- Speaker, Lean on Me, Supporting Families of Homicide
- Speaker, Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists Conference
- Speaker, Ombudsman's Office
- Speaker, Operational Change Management Conference
- Speaker, York Region Children's Aid Society
- Speaker, Victim/Witness Assistance Programs
- Speaker, Parkdale Community Legal Services - Intensive Program in Poverty Law

Recognition

- Selected by peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in Canada*™ in the field of Labour and Employment Law (2024)

“We have been working with Pallett Valo for the past 10+ years and I would highly recommend Maria Tassou as an exceptional employment lawyer. Her solid know-how and experience shine through and she makes every case a seamless win-win process for her clients. Maria's well founded cost-effective solutions prove to be the best every single time. Highly recommended for best-in-class legal advice!”

- Diana Valler, CHRL, CHRP, Chief Human Resources Officer, Red Label Vacations Inc.

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Pallett Valo LLP will, upon request, provide this information in an accessible format.

