

## **2026 Payroll Alert: Bi-Weekly Employers Will See 27 Pay Periods—Here's What That Means for You and Your Team**

It doesn't happen often – in fact, it's pretty much every 11 years, but it's coming. In 2026, the payroll calendar creates a rare scenario: 27 bi-weekly pay periods instead of the usual 26. For employers using a bi-weekly schedule, this could mean changes to employee pay, budgeting, and deductions, and raises many questions if it's not communicated properly.

At BLANKSLATE, we're already working with clients to prepare for this shift, and we recommend you start thinking ahead, too.

### **What's Actually Happening?**

In most years, bi-weekly payroll means 26 pay periods. But every 11 years or so, the way the calendar falls adds an extra payday—27 in total. That's what's happening in 2026.

**Important: This change only affects companies that pay employees on a bi-weekly schedule. Semi-monthly and monthly payrolls won't be impacted.**

### **Two Payroll Options for 2026**

You have a couple of ways to approach this, and both are valid. The key is to choose what's right for your business—and communicate it clearly to your team.

#### **Option 1: Spread Salaries Over 27 Pay Periods**

Annual salary stays the same

Each paycheck is slightly smaller

Easier to administer

Requires **clear communication** to avoid confusion

## **Option 2: Keep 26-Pay Amounts + Add a 27th Adjustment**

Regular pay stays consistent  
Employees receive a smaller or a balancing 27th pay  
Perceived as more predictable by employees  
Requires advance planning and explanation

### **What Employees Might Notice**

A smaller or extra paycheque, depending on approach  
CPP/EI may max out earlier in the year (affecting net pay)  
Benefits premiums may shift slightly  
Potential for confusion or concern if not communicated early

### **Why This Needs Your Attention Now**

The math isn't changing—but perceptions will. Even a small shift in per-pay amounts or an unexpected “bonus” cheque can prompt questions (and sometimes complaints). The best way to handle this? Clear, proactive, transparent communication.

### **BLANKSLATE Can Help**

Confused - we get it - feel free to reach out!

Customized employee memos and email templates  
Manager FAQs  
Payroll and benefits alignment  
Communication strategy and timing

