

Month In Review – British Columbia



LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Combustible Dusts

Dec 16: Comments closed on important new [OHS regulations](#) that require employers to implement a comprehensive exposure control plan for combustible dusts that includes, among other things, assessment and management of deflagration, combustion, and ignition hazards.

Action Point: Find out about the 3 steps you must take to [protect workers from combustible dusts](#) hazards.

PPE

Dec 16: Newly proposed [OHS amendments](#) add 2 standards to the list of acceptable standards for safety headgear with bicycles and skates: ASTM F1447-06 (Standard Specification for Helmets Used in Recreational Bicycling or Roller Skating), and Snell Memorial Foundation Standard B-90A (1998 Augmentation to the 1990 Standard for Protective Headgear). Effective date: April 1, 2026.

Action Point: Use the OHSI [PPE Head Protection Compliance Game Plan](#) to prevent head injuries and OHS penalties at your

workplace.

Respiratory Protection

Dec 16: WorkSafeBC proposed [OHS amendments](#) to replace the reference to the 1993 edition of CSA Standard Z94.4 for respirators with a reference to the 2018 edition, CSA-Z94.4-18, Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators. The Standard appears in Parts 8 and 31 of the OHS Regulations. Effective date: April 1, 2026.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [Respiratory Protection Equipment Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

Emergency Response

Dec 29: During the 2025 season, 1,350 wildfires burned an estimated 886,360 hectares of land in British Columbia, as compared to 1,697 wildfires and 1,081,159 hectares burned in 2024, 2,293 wildfires and 2,840,104 hectares burned in 2023, 1,801 wildfires and 135,235 hectares burned in 2022, and 1,647 wildfires and 869,300 hectares burned in 2021.

Workplace Violence

Dec 17: British Columbia's Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative to prevent repeat violence offences seems to be working. Police interactions for all offences involving accused individuals dropped significantly by nearly 1,500 (50%) in the 18 months after being designated for ReVOII. Violent-offence interactions declined even further by 480 (56%) in that same period.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Violence and Harassment Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

Workers' Compensation

Dec 19: WorkSafeBC issued [new guidance](#) to clarify how employers should treat tips and gratuities when calculating and reporting their assessable payroll for purposes of workers' comp. Specifically, the guidance explains the rules governing what makes tips "verifiable."

Workers' Compensation

Feb 28: February 28th is the deadline for the first group of BC employers to submit their actual 2025 payroll numbers and 2026 estimates to WorkSafeBC. For some employers, the reporting deadline is either March 15 or March 31, depending on the last 2 digits of their employer account number.

CASES

Combustible Dusts: Smelting Mishap Leads to Record \$788,867 OHS Fine

British Columbia handed out the largest OHS fine reported in Canada in 2025, to a Montreal-based mining company for a smelting incident in which a flame from an enclosed manganese hopper created enough pressure to displace a lid to a nearby platform injuring a worker operating an alloy system. Inspectors determined that alloy station wasn't designed to be used for manganese, a combustible dust. Result: A stop-work order and \$788,867 administrative monetary penalty against the company for failure to ensure its workplace was planned, constructed, used, and maintained to protect workers from danger [*Rio Tinto Alcan Inc.*].

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective and legally sound [Fire Prevention Compliance Game Plan](#) to prevent fires and explosions at your workplace.

OHS Enforcement: Remorse, Review & Remediation Lead to \$150,000 Rather than \$300,000 Fine

A Yukon-based drilling company admitted its failure to provide adequate safety training to a mine worker who died in a worksite utility terrain vehicle accident. The prosecution wanted a \$300,000 fine. The British Columbia court decided on a fine of \$150,000, \$10,000 of which would be a charitable donation, citing the company's acknowledgement of guilt, sincere remorse, previously unblemished safety record and comprehensive review and overhaul of its safety procedures in response to the incident [[*R. v. New Age Drilling Solutions Inc.*](#), 2025 BCPC 204 (CanLII), December 2, 2025].

Action Point: The takeaway from the *New Age* case is that the company was fined \$150,000 less than the prosecution wanted because of the things it did after committing the violation, such as expressing remorse and taking corrective measures to improve its OHS policies and prevent a recurrence. Find out more about the [factors courts use in sentencing a company for an OHS violation](#).

Crane Safety: Prime Contractor Penalized \$688,589 for Repeat Crane Violation

The rigging sling from a crane moving a load of steel canopy components from a balcony to a lower level failed after being by the sharp edge of a canopy section causing the load to fall. The prime contractor at the project had experienced another incident at a second site where a tower crane lost its load while lifting core box formwork. WorkSafeBC fined the prime contractor \$688,589 for failing to develop an adequate lifting plan for handling multi-connected formwork panels and implement a system for inspecting rigging work [[*EllisDon Corporation/EllisDon Westpro Construction Ltd.*](#)].

Action Point: Don't let this kind of thing happen on your watch! Find out how to implement [effective rigging safety practices](#) to prevent crane, hoisting, and lift accidents.

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