

# Month In Review – British Columbia



## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Inspection

Sep 5: That's the deadline [to comment](#) on proposed new OHS Regs requiring certain safety equipment to be “certified safe for use” at designated intervals. The rule, which currently covers only self-erecting tower cranes, would apply to all tower cranes, as well as mobile cranes, boom trucks, vehicle-mounted elevating work platforms, self-propelled boom-supported elevating work platforms, and excavation masts.

**Action Point:** Use the OHS Insider [Cranes/Hoists/Lifting Device Compliance Game Plan](#) to prevent crane violations at your workplace.

### Sanitation & Housekeeping

Oct 1: [New OHS rules](#) for washroom facilities at construction sites take effect, including the requirement that toilets be situated within enclosed space that provides privacy for the user, is illuminated and ventilated, and, if practicable, heated. In addition, there must also be a handwashing facility within or close to the enclosed space.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a [Sanitation and Toilets Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

## Combustible Dusts

Sep 26: That's the deadline [to comment](#) on WorkSafeBC's [proposed changes](#) to Part 6 of the OHS Regulations for combustible dusts. Highlights: i. New exemption for employers whose dust poses low risk to workers; ii. Clarification that rules cover an "employer who generates or handles dust"; and iii. Clarification that training and instruction need be provided only to workers "who could be exposed" to a combustion risk.

**Action Point:** Take 3 steps to [protect workers from hazardous dusts](#).

## Material Handling

Sep 5: That's the deadline [to comment](#) on [proposed amendments](#) to Part 12 of the *OHS Regulations*. Highlights: i. Revised versions of ANSI standards that automotive lifts must meet; ii. New exception allowing for operation of automotive lifts that don't meet ANSI standards under certain conditions; iii. New requirements for assembly and installation of automotive lifts, portable automotive lifting devices, or other vehicle support; and iv. Clarification that automotive lifts that don't pass inspection must be immediately removed from service, tagged as such and not restored to service until they pass the inspection that caused them to be taken out of service.

## PPE

Jul 24: WorkSafeBC published proposed [OHS amendments](#) adding 2 standards to the list of acceptable standards for safety headgear with bicycles and skates: i. ASTM F1447-06 (Standard Specification for Helmets Used in Recreational Bicycling or

Roller Skating); and ii. Snell Memorial Foundation Standard B-90A (1998 Augmentation to the 1990 Standard for Protective Headgear). The other acceptable standards are CSA-D113.2-M89, Snell Memorial Foundation 1994 Standard for Protective Headgear for Use in Non-Motorized Sports, and Snell Memorial Foundation 1995 Standard for Protective Headgear for Use in Bicycling.

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

## Respiratory Protection

Sep 26: That's the deadline to comment on WorkSafeBC's [proposal](#) to replace the reference to the 1993 edition of CSA Standard Z94.4 for the selection, care and use of respirators with a reference to the 2018 edition of the standard. Respiratory protection equipment requirements appear in Parts 8 and 31 of the *OHS Regulations*.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a compliant [Respiratory Protection Policy](#) at your workplace.

## New Laws

Jul 16: BC has received nearly 780 job applications from qualified health professionals across the U.S. since launching its recruitment campaign 2 months ago. New rules allow for US-trained doctors to become fully licensed in BC without need for further assessment, examination or training if they hold certification from the American Board of Medical Specialties, American Board of Family Medicine, or the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians.

## Industry Challenges

Jul 25: The Governments of BC and Canada increased the

compensation rate to producers under the AgriStability program from 80 to 90 cents for each dollar of decline in eligible income. The compensation cap for larger farms and ranches also doubled from \$3 million to \$6 million. AgriStability is a whole-farm, low-cost business risk-management program that helps farm operations manage large declines in net farming income via personalized coverage based on each farm's income tax and production.

## Emergency Response

Jul 24: BC announced that it will provide nearly \$2 million in Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) support to help 51 local communities improve their emergency response, evacuation planning and public notification programs in preparing for emergencies.

**Action Point:** Ensure that your company is [properly prepared for hurricanes and other workplace emergencies](#).

## Drugs & Alcohol

Jul 31: The BC Coroners Service reported that there were 145 illegal drug toxicity deaths in the province in May and 147 in June. The cities with the highest number of drug deaths this year are Vancouver, Surrey and Greater Victoria. Fentanyl has been found in the bodies of 70% of victims in 2025, followed by methamphetamine (52%) and cocaine (51%).

**Action Point:** Many overdose deaths occur in the workplace. Find out [how to implement a workplace Naloxone Program to prevent opioid overdose deaths at your site](#).

## Workers' Comp

Jul 14: Thanks to a \$570 million surplus, WorkSafeBC announced that it's planning to keep 2026 average workers' comp premium rates at \$1.55 per \$100 assessable payroll for the ninth year

in a row. Actual industry base rates are expected to increase for 47% of employers, decrease for 39% and stay the same for the remaining 14%.

## Environmental

Aug 15: Effective today, drivers of eligible plug-in hybrid or battery-electric vehicles no longer have to display an OK decal to use high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on designated BC roadways. Access to HOV lanes for EV drivers will now be indicated solely by road signs.

## CASES

### Machine Safety: Failure to Guard Cylinder Results in Injury, Nearly \$500K Fine

WorkSafeBC fined a pulp mill \$489,104 for failing to ensure that its machinery and equipment was fitted with adequate safeguards to protect workers from hazardous points of operation. That's the ninth highest reported OHS fine in Canada this year. Inspectors visited the site in response to an incident in which a worker was injured when an unguarded cylinder activated on a hydraulic pumping system (atmospheric diffuser) [*Canfor Pulp Ltd.*, July 10, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out how to prevent these kinds of injuries and massive OHS fines by implementing a legally sound [Machine Guarding Compliance Game Plan at](#) your workplace.

### Drugs & Alcohol: Minor Vehicle Accident Is Grounds for Post-Incident Drug Test

A worker driving a bomb-cart tractor-trailer to transport containers accidentally struck a parked rubber tire gantry. The company demanded that he submit to drug testing. The union claimed the incident wasn't a "significant event" justifying

testing under the company's post-incident testing policy. The BC arbitrator disagreed. The fact that the incident was an unusual occurrence plus the \$2,500 in property damage it caused was reasonable evidence to conclude that it was a "significant event." The company also did a reasonable investigation before ordering the test [[\*British Columbia Maritime Employers' Association v International Longshore and Warehouse Union – Canada\*](#), 2025 CanLII 72308 (BC LA), June 9, 2025].

Action Point: As this case illustrates, post-incident drug testing cases are often determined based now on what a testing policy says but how it's actually carried out. Find out how to implement a [Drugs and Alcohol Testing Policy](#) at your own workplace.

## **Material Handling: Discount Retailer Penalized at Full Price for OHS Violations**

WorkSafeBC rang up Dollar Tree for \$129,482 in administrative monetary penalties after inspectors observed a slew of OHS violations at its Fort St. John Store, including failure to ensure that storage rack rated capacity was clearly posted and material and equipment was stacked in a stable and secure manner. The firm failed to perform a violence risk assessment, maintain up-to-date written first aid procedures and keep passageways and working space around electrical equipment clear of obstructions [*Dollar Tree Stores Canada, Inc*, July 3, 2025].

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