

Month In Review – British Columbia



LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Work Injuries

Apr 27: There were 138 work fatalities in British Columbia in 2025, including 79 occupational disease deaths of which 36 were due to asbestos exposure. Forty-one workers were killed by traumatic workplace injuries resulting from incidents such as falls from heights, being struck by objects, and being caught in machinery. Another 18 workers died in motor vehicle incidents.

PPE

Apr 21: WorkSafeBC completed public consultations on revised *OHS Regulations* requirements that operators and passengers on all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, and motorcycles wear headgear meeting: i. CSA CAN3-D230-M85, Protective Headgear in Motor Vehicle Applications; ii. British Safety Institution Standard BS5361.1976; iii. Snell Memorial Foundation 1995 Standard for Protective Headgear; or iv. US Federal Standard for Motorcycle Helmets.

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

workplace.

Material Handling

Apr 24: Comments closed on [proposed changes](#) to OHS regulations (Part 12) on automotive lifts and other vehicle supports. Key revisions: i. new standards for automotive lifts; ii. clarification that lifting devices designed for parking or storage aren't considered "automotive lifts;" iii. mandatory "qualified person" inspections of autolifts not built to listed standards at least every four months; iv. certification of autolifts as safe for use; v. requirement that a qualified person assemble and install autolifts, portable automotive lifting devices, or other vehicle supports in accordance with a proposed installation standard; and v. new recordkeeping obligations for inspection and maintenance.

Action Point: Jacks and automotive lifts are extremely hazardous. Find out how to implement an effective [Tire, Wheel & Rim Servicing Safety & Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Transportation Safety

Apr 16: Getting a driver's licence in British Columbia will be much easier now that [Bill 6](#) amending the *Motor Vehicle Act* to establish a system enabling residents to apply for, renew, or replace their licence online has received Royal Assent. Regulations will be necessary to fill in the crucial operational details.

Transportation Safety

Apr 27: [Private Member Bill M217](#), which is now through Committee, would require the installation of dashboard cameras in commercial vehicles with a gross weight of over 8,200 kgs. Required cameras must retain at least 72 hours of footage, have at least 1,080 progressive scan high-definition

resolution and night vision capability, and record at the manufacturer 's default settings on the device 's local storage. Footage would also be subject to privacy protections.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [legally sound video surveillance policy](#) to ensure safety in vehicles and at your workplace without violating workers' privacy rights.

Emergency Response

Apr 16: Private Member [Bill M 214](#) requiring the government to develop a plan to provide comprehensive health screening of firefighters and to review the plan every five years received Royal Assent.

Action Point: With the wildfire season officially underway, it's important to implement a [Wildfire Smoke Protection Game Plan](#) to guard your workers against smoke exposure, both indoors and outdoors.

Emergency Response

Apr 30: The BC Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF) program announced that it's investing over \$18 million in 10 projects to help local governments and First Nations across the province reduce risk of flood, drought, extreme temperatures, earthquakes, and landslides. The largest outlays will go to the Shishalh Nation (\$5 million) and the Cities of Terrace (\$4.075 million) and Vancouver (\$3.1 million).

Industry Challenges

Apr 21: Third Reading for [Bill 14](#) authorizing BC Timber Sales (BCTS) to issue timber sales licences for a wider range for a wider range of fibre-generating and forest stewardship activities, including commercial thinning, wildfire risk reduction, and salvage of damaged trees. The government claims that the new licensing regime will create jobs and increase

the province's fibre supply by as much as 17,700 truckloads, or 800,000 cubic metres.

New Laws

Apr 16: Newly passed [Bill 10](#) speeds up and improves the Employment Standards Branch (ESB) employee complaint and dispute-resolution process for non-union employees set out in the *Employment Standards Act* and for TFWs under the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*. Approximately 75% of resolution meetings at the ESB result in voluntary resolution within 30 to 45 days from when a file is first assigned to an ESB officer.

New Laws

Apr 20: British Columbia announced that it's opting in on a proposed federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) policy change that temporarily allows rural employers to retain existing low-wage temporary foreign workers beyond the current 10% cap. However, the province isn't opting in to the proposed increase of the low-wage stream cap to 15%, which would allow employers to bring in more new temporary foreign workers. Seasonal, short-term and primary agriculture positions will remain exempt from caps.

Action Point: Expect more of your workforce to speak a language other than English and find out [whether OHS laws require you to provide multilingual safety training](#) to your workers.

Training

Apr 10: Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) announced that it will invest \$13.3 million over the next four years in new apprenticeship grants to address labour shortages in the automotive collision repair industry. Eligible ICBC Repair Network facilities will be able [to apply](#) for grants of

up to \$56,500 per apprenticeship covering a substantial portion of employers' apprenticeship costs.

Industry Challenges

Apr 30: British Columbia announced a new \$20.8 million grant to provide upskill training and wage support to as many as 1,400 forestry workers, contractors, and employers affected by tariffs. The province will deliver the money in partnership with the Northern Development Initiative Trust via contracts available through BC Bid. The grant can also be stacked to include funding for worker training, wages, or workforce supports alongside logging and contractor work.

Industry Challenges

Apr 9: British Columbia-based Atlas Engineered Products Ltd. will receive over \$4 million from the federal [Investments in Forest Industry Transformation \(IFIT\) program](#) to build a new, cutting-edge wood manufacturing facility, powered by advanced robotics. Forest sector businesses can use the new, [single-window pathfinding service](#) to find out about and apply for federal funding opportunities.

Workplace Harassment

Apr 2: Newly tabled [Bill 17](#) would authorize the government to adopt a province-wide uniform code of conduct for all local elected officials in British Columbia. The code of conduct, which is expected to be in place after October 17, 2026 general local elections, would address bullying or harassment in meetings, harassment of staff, and disrespectful behaviour between elected officials. Such codes, to the extent they exist, are currently created and enforced at the local level.

Action Point: Use the OHS Insider [Assessment Questionnaire template](#) to uncover hidden harassment, bullying, and stalking problems at your workplace.

Workplace Violence

Apr 16: British Columbia passed legislation to expand safe-access zones at schools and create them at places of worship in which people are banned from engaging in activity designed to interfere or prevent access to those locations. "Children should be able to get to school, and people should be able to visit their place of worship, without facing intimidation," noted the BC Attorney General.

Workplace Violence

Apr 16: Royal Assent for [Bill 13](#) expanding safe-access zones at schools and creating them at places of worship in which people are banned from engaging in activity designed to interfere or prevent access to those locations. "Children should be able to get to school, and people should be able to visit their place of worship, without facing intimidation," noted the BC Attorney General in introducing the bills.

Action Point: Are you doing enough to prevent violence at your workplace? Find out how to perform a [Workplace Violence Compliance Audit](#) to find out.

Workplace Violence

Apr 27: A new coroner's panel [report](#) recommends actions British Columbia can take to reduce intimate-partner violence deaths, including enhanced training for law enforcement, first responders, emergency department staff, and front-line service providers. The panel reviewed information about the 135 intimate-partner deaths in the province between Jan. 1, 2016, and Dec. 31, 2024.

Action Point: Domestic and intimate-partner violence becomes an OHS compliance issue when it happens at the victim's workplace. Bottom Line: Simply having a workplace violence prevention plan isn't enough. You also need to incorporate

protections against workplace domestic violence into the prevention plan. Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Domestic Violence Prevention Plan](#) to protect your own workers.

Drugs & Alcohol

Apr 15: The BC Coroners Service reported that there were 115 suspected toxic drug deaths in the province in February, roughly 4.1 per day. The Fraser and Vancouver Coastal health authorities have reported the highest number of unregulated drug deaths in 2026 (with 62 and 74, respectively), making up 51% of all reported deaths during the year.

Action Point: Find out [how to implement a workplace Naloxone Program to](#) save lives and prevent opioid overdose deaths at your site.

Workers' Compensation

May 22: British Columbia employers will now have to provide two-factor authentication to sign into their WorkSafeBC online services account. In addition to your password, the new security protocol will ask you to confirm your identity with a one-time code that will be sent to your phone or email. Each user must have their own account and shared logins will no longer work.

Environmental

Apr 16: Newly passed [Bill 15](#) makes the environmental assessment process that new projects must navigate more predictable by establishing clear rules governing how issues raised by First Nations are identified and resolved during the process. The Bill also provides for third-party dispute resolution if the Province and a First Nation can't reach consensus at milestones during the environmental assessment process.

Environmental

Apr 29: In a move to support automakers, British Columbia passed [Bill 16](#), officially reducing its zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) sales target from 100% to 75% by 2035. As a result, sales of new internal-combustion-engine vehicles will still be allowed after Jan. 1, 2035. The legislation also lowers the ZEV sales targets from 2026 to 2030. Meanwhile, the CleanBC Go Electric program is funding 75 new public electric vehicle charging projects in communities throughout the province.

CASES

OHS Enforcement: Excavation Contractor Fined \$460,000 for C-45 Criminal Negligence

A British Columbia trial court convicted an excavation contractor of two counts of C-45 criminal negligence resulting in the death of one worker and serious injury to another after a retaining wall collapsed and fell into a trench. Prosecutors asked for a \$1 million global penalty; the contractor argued for a \$345,000 fine. The sentencing judge decided that \$400,000 plus a \$60,000 victim's surcharge would be high enough to penalize the company for its inadequate training and "insufficient appreciation of foreseeable risks in trench work." But since then it had implemented "proactive" OHS programs and was "a very different company today than it was at the time of the incident." Having already lost customers and goodwill, loading on a more massive fine the way the prosecution wanted would serve only to threaten the survival of its business [[R. v J. Cote and Son Excavating Ltd.](#), 2026 BCSC 626 (CanLII), April 15, 2026].

Action Point: The C-45 criminal negligence standard (Section 217.1 of the *Criminal Code*) requires the prosecutor to prove

that a person with control over how work is failed to take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm to persons carrying out the work and that such failure was due to “wanton or reckless disregard for safety.” Find out what you can do to [manage criminal liability risks under C-45](#).

Hot Work: Petroleum Refiner Fined \$182,282 for Fuel Line Hot Oil Spew

An uncontrolled flow of oil occurred during an operation to clear a blockage in a heavy fuel oil line at a petroleum refinery site. One of the workers’ clothing ended up getting sprayed with hot oil. WorkSafeBC cited the employer for a host of OHS violations including failure to implement safe work procedures for the blockage clearance, perform a hazard assessment, issue a hot work permit, deploy a standby person, or ensure workers wore required PPE. Result: An administrative monetary penalty of \$182,282 [*Tidewater Midstream and Infrastructure Ltd.*].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [Hot Work and Welding Compliance Game Plan at](#) your workplace.

Infectious Illness: COVID Vaccination Refusal Isn’t Grounds to Terminate MD’s Contract

At the height of the pandemic, the Northern Health Authority (NHA) terminated the service contract of a pediatrician for not getting the COVID vaccine, claiming that the contract had been frustrated since vaccination was ordered by the Public Health Officer (PHO). The arbitrator disagreed and awarded the pediatrician \$388,512 in wrongful dismissal and breach of contract damages. NHA appealed to the BC Court of Appeal. But the high court concluded that the arbitrator’s ruling that the PHO vaccination order was neither a legal change nor

supervening event that frustrated the purpose of the pediatrician's contract was legally sound and not a clear mistake of law [[Northern Health Authority v. du Plessis](#), 2026 BCCA 143 (CanLII), April 9, 2026].

Action Point: Dealing with vaccine refusals, whether COVID-19, influenza, measles, or any other pathogen, is very tricky even in health-sensitive settings. Find out how to take the right steps if [workers defy your mandatory vaccination policy](#).

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