

OHS Compliance Monthly Briefing for British Columbia



November was an active month on the OHS regulatory front highlighted by important deadlines looming and new legislation moving toward enactment. Here's a look at the key developments that may affect the OHS program of BC companies along with Action Points for dealing with them.

WHMIS & Hazardous Products

January 1, 2026 is the final deadline to comply with [GHS 7 WHMIS rules](#). For most companies, the biggest changes relate to the hazard information that must be listed on Safety Data Sheets (Sections 9 & 14). In addition, there are new GHS 7 classification rules for flammable gases, aerosols, chemicals under pressure, and STOT-SE Category 3 chemicals. Combustible dust hazard statement requirements are updated to allow either the original statement or "May form explosible dust-air mixture."

Respiratory Protection & PPE

WorkSafeBC proposed amendments to Section 8.39 of the *OHS Regulations*, replacing the term "clean shaven" with language requiring that "nothing is allowed to intrude between the skin of a worker's face or neck and the respirator seal."

Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness

Proposed amendments to Part 31 of the *OHS Regulations* clarify firefighter definitions and extend obligations to society for fire brigades and volunteer firefighters. The regulatory changes aim to ensure consistent responsibilities for fire prevention and emergency response across all sectors.

Work Injuries & High-Risk Industries

WorkSafeBC reported that manufacturing remains a high-risk sector, with serious injury rates 44% above the provincial average over the past 5 years. Overexertion, contact with objects, falls, and machinery incidents are the leading cause of injuries.

Transportation Safety

Proposed Bill 12 amendments to the *Motor Vehicle Act* give ICBC authority to impose new driver testing and waiting periods for novice drivers, pending regulations. These measures impact fleet operators and mobile worker safety.

Privacy, Harassment, & Violence

Bill 17 raises penalties under the *Intimate Images Protection Act*, emphasizing the need for effective workplace cyberbullying and harassment policies.

Meanwhile, Bill 18 requires post-secondary institutions to implement sexual violence policies, reflecting an increasing focus on psychosocial hazards and workplace culture.

Toxic Drug Deaths

Preliminary data indicate that there were 158 unregulated drug deaths in BC in September 2025, concentrated in urban areas.

Additionally, Bill 24 may hold vaping manufacturers accountable for public health harms, underscoring ongoing substance exposure risk management in the workplace.

Key Cases

The BC government fined itself \$759,368 for multiple OHS violations stemming from 2 different wildfire fighting incidents, one of which resulted in a fatality. This is the fourth highest OHS fine reported in Canada in 2025.

In *Pereira v. BC (Workers' Compensation Board)*, BC's highest court confirmed that WorkSafeBC may cite employers for OHS workplace harassment violations and still not impose penalties when, as in this case, the violation is unintentional and exposes the victim to no actual harm.

In *Cipa Lumber Co. Ltd. v United Steelworkers*, an arbitrator ruled that a worker who lied when he told his supervisor that he was wearing PPE didn't deserve to lose his job, given that it was a single act of dishonesty by a worker with no disciplinary record. So, the arbitrator reduced the penalty to a suspension.

Action Points

Here's a Checklist of Action Points for BC OHS coordinators to take away from these developments:

WHMIS GHS 7 Compliance

- Conduct an [SDS inspection](#) to assess whether your current SDSs meet the new GHS 7 requirements for Sections 9 and 14.
- If the current SDS isn't compliant, [get an updated version of the SDS from the](#) supplier of the product.
- Find out more about [the new SDS standards](#) and the 6 things you must do to comply, along with [templates of written requests](#) and [other records you'll need to document compliance](#).

2. Respiratory Protection & PPE

- Update PPE policies in line with proposed WorkSafeBC tight-fitting respirator regulations ensuring accommodations for religious practices and proper fit-testing.
- Be aware that requiring workers who use tight-fitting respirators to be clean shaven can expose you to liability risks for religious discrimination and find out [how far you must bend PPE rules to accommodate workers' religion](#).

3. Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness

- Review Part 31 amendments and find out how to implement an effective and legally sound [Fire Prevention Compliance Game Plan](#).

4. Transportation Safety

1. ▪ Monitor Bill 12 amendments and anticipate regulatory requirements for driver

testing and licensing. Update fleet and mobile worker safety programs accordingly.

5. Workplace Violence, Domestic Violence & Harassment

- Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Violence and Harassment Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.
- Recognize that domestic violence can extend into the workplace and implement an effective [Workplace Domestic Violence Prevention Plan](#) to protect your own workers.

6. Cybersecurity & Privacy

- Update your workplace bullying and harassment policies to comply with Bill 17 and the *Intimate Images Protection Act*, including with regard to cyberbullying prevention and handling of intimate images.
- Find out how to create and implement an effective [Cyberbullying Prevention Policy](#) at your workplace.

7. Drugs & OverdoseDeathPrevention

- Recognize that many overdose fatalities occur in the workplace and find out [how to implement a workplace Naloxone Program to](#) prevent opioid overdose deaths at your site.

8. Smoking & Vaping Compliance

- Take 5 steps to [prevent workplace smoking](#) and

- vaping and avoid fines under smoke-free laws.
- Monitor Bill 24 for new vaping regulations.