

MAY 2024 MONTH IN REVIEW

Saskatchewan

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Workers Comp

Apr 24: In 2023, Saskatchewan recorded its lowest workplace injury rate ever at 3.95 per 100 workers, with the Time Loss injury rate dropping to 1.78. [The Workers' Compensation Board \(WCB\) reported financial stability with a sufficiency ratio of 135.7%, and workplace fatalities decreased to 29 from 39 in 2022.](#)

New Laws

Apr 24: Second Reading for Bill 160, *The Immigration Services Act*. Highlights: i. Improvements to Saskatchewan's immigration system; ii. Stronger protections for foreign workers against exploitation by employers, recruiters and immigration consultants; and iii. Expanded enforcement against and higher penalties for immigration fraud.

Accessibility

May 10: Saskatchewan completed [online surveying](#) asking the public about the barriers people with disabilities may experience when using government services, programs and facilities. The province is currently reviewing *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act* that officially took effect on December 3, 2023.

Action Point: [Find out more](#) about how accessibility requirements affect your OHS program

Workplace Violence

Apr 29: Saskatchewan's new budget earmarks \$42.6 million over 3 years to 34

community-based service organizations and 54 programs across the province that provide supports and services to victims of interpersonal violence and their families, including for residential transitioning and support and Family Intervention Rapid Support Teams (FIRST).

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

Mental Health

May 8: In Saskatchewan, [progress on suicide prevention initiatives has been notable as the government commemorates the four-year anniversary of its suicide prevention plan](#). Ongoing efforts encompass mental wellness camps, youth summits, community-led initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and safe medication disposal programs. With a record investment of \$574 million in mental health and addictions, including \$2.25 million for suicide prevention, the government remains committed to collaborating with Indigenous partners and stakeholders to enhance suicide prevention.

Action Point: implement a legally sound [Mental Health Accommodations Policy & Procedure](#)

Emergency Response

May 7: [Saskatchewan has declared May 5-11, 2024, as Emergency Preparedness Week, urging residents to be ready for any situation](#). With the theme "Be Prepared. Know Your Risks," the focus is on understanding potential hazards and taking proactive steps to protect families. Minister Paul Merriman stresses the importance of emergency plans and kits, while the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency emphasizes readiness, especially in remote areas. A SaskAlert system test on May 8 ensures effective communication during emergencies.

Action Point: Implement a legally [sound Emergency Preparedness & Response Policy](#)

Workplace Violence

May 1: [All provincially regulated workplaces in Saskatchewan were required to have violence policies and prevention plans](#), as per amendments to The Saskatchewan Employment Act. The amendments extended coverage to students, volunteers, and contract workers, mandating policies to minimize risks, identify vulnerable positions, establish reporting and investigation procedures, and provide support and training for affected workers.

Action Point: Use the extensive resources on the OHSI [Workplace Violence Compliance Center](#) to protect your workers from violence and harassment

CASES

Due Diligence: Victims' Failure to Use Fall Protection No Defence Against OHS Violations

Tying in power lines in a bucket truck 15 feet above the ground was old hat for the 2 highly experienced Saskatchewan Power Corporation (SPC) journeymen workers that lost their lives on Oct. 8, 2020. Regrettably, neither of them had their safety belt lanyards anchored to the “D” ring when the bucket tipped over. Prosecutors charged SPC with 4 OHS violations and won conviction on 3—failure to provide safe equipment, proper training or fall protection on elevated work platforms. The Sask. court rejected SPC’s due diligence defences. SPC didn’t adequately inspect the equipment, especially when it was aware of the risk of bolt breakages; and it was reasonably foreseeable that journeymen workers with nearly 20 years of experience might forget to clip in their fall protection while being elevated, a situation the company could have easily rectified [*R. v. Saskatchewan Power Corporation*, 2024 SKPC 12 (CanLII), April 30, 2024].

Action Point: Use the [OHSI Due Diligence Scorecard](#) to assess the adequacy of your own OHS program

Material Handling: Failure to Provide Rigging Safety Training Leads to \$260,000 Fine

Saskatchewan handed out its largest OHS penalty of the year so far--\$260,000 against a company for failing to ensure that a worker required or permitted to assemble, use, maintain or dismantle rigging is trained in safe rigging practices. The fine stems from an incident in which a worker suffered serious injury while attempting to load a 4,000-pound crate of glass onto a truck [*Richelieu Hardware Canada Ltd.*, [Govt. Press Release](#), May 3, 2024].

Action Point: Use the resources on the OHS Insider Material Handling [Compliance Center](#) to prevent injuries and violations at your workplace