

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Workplace Harassment

Aug 10: WorkSafeBC [proposed](#) important new OHS (Part 4.1) Regulations requiring employers to implement workplace harassment and violence programs that include written policies and procedures for dealing with harassment and violence, training workers on the risks, recording incidents, and implementing or modifying control measures to eliminate or minimize risk of recurrence. Deadline [to comment](#): October 9.

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

PPE

Aug 31: From now through October 26, WorkSafeBC will be taking [comments](#) on proposed OHS [amendments](#) requiring personal protective equipment (PPE) to properly fit and be as comfortable as practicable based on the worker's characteristics and workplace conditions. In selecting required PPE, employers must consult with the joint health and safety committee or safety representative, as well as a "representative sample of the workers" who'll be required to use the PPE.

Action Point: Find out why [standard PPE leaves women workers exposed to injury risk](#) and how to implement a strategy for ensuring that the PPE you select is suitable to workers of all sexes and body types, which will be crucial if and when Bill 229 passes and takes effect.

Fire Safety

Aug 27: Although the state of emergency has ended, the government is asking British Columbians to take steps to reduce their exposure to toxic wildfire smoke that's still permeating much of the province. Recommendations include creating a clean air space at home, avoiding strenuous exercise, and considering use of a well-fitted N95 mask. Employers should also protect workers who work outdoors or in poorly ventilated facilities.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [Wildfire Smoke Protection Game Plan](#) to guard your workers against smoke exposure, both indoors and outdoors.

Transportation Safety

Sep 1: Effective October 19, 2026, BC drivers with a Class 7 novice or Class 7, 8 novice licence and a clean driving record won't take a second road test to get a Class 5 licence with restrictions. Instead, they'll undergo a Driving Record Assessment demonstrating safe driving and, thus, eligibility to upgrade their licence from novice status. Unsafe behaviours like convictions for speeding and electronic device use, will result in re-starting the "novice" period. Drivers who pass the assessment will be eligible to move to a Class 5 licence after a 12-month restricted period.

Transportation Safety

Aug 26: Transport Canada's Airports Capital Assistance Program announced an investment of over \$23.5 million to support critical infrastructure and safety improvements at six local airports across British Columbia, including Prince Rupert, Fort Nelson, Kamloops, Smithers, Masset, and Bella Coola.

Action Point: Find out how to create a [Safety Policy for Business Travel to Dangerous Locations](#).

Industry Challenges

Aug 20: The federal and provincial governments are jointly investing \$106.5 million to create a new wild Pacific salmon conservation and recovery program. Over the next seven years, the British Columbia Fisheries Fund (BCFF) will support 170 projects dedicated to salmon infrastructure, innovation, scientific research, and marketing with Ottawa to provide 60% and British Columbia with 40% of the funding.

Respiratory Protection

Sep 1: Revised [OHS requirements](#) for use of tight-fitting respirators officially take effect in British Columbia on November 6. The new rules eliminate the term "clean shaven" and replace it with new language requiring employers to ensure that nothing is allowed to intrude between the skin of a worker's face or neck and the respirator seal, or otherwise interfere with the proper functioning of the respirator.

Action Point: Requiring workers who use tight-fitting respirators to be clean shaven can expose you to discrimination liability risks when shaving would violate a worker's religion. Find out more about workers' rights to safety policy exemptions and other reasonable accommodations and [how far you must bend PPE rules to accommodate workers' religion](#).

New Laws

Sep 2: Northern BC businesses may now apply to the new Business Diversification and Sustainability (BDS) program for grants of up to \$200,000, covering as much as 75% of project costs to purchase equipment, adopt new technology, expand markets, introduce new products or services, or increase productivity. Deadline to [apply](#): October 15, 2026.

New Laws

Aug 10: The federal government announced over \$30.5 million of Regional Tariff Response Initiative (RTRI) funding to enhance the competitiveness of 24 British Columbia businesses in key sectors affected by U.S. tariffs, including advanced manufacturing, forestry, steel, and aluminum. Recipients will use the money to boost productivity, cut costs, build more resilient supply chains, and reach new markets.

Action Point: Find out about [how tariffs affect your OHS program](#).

Drugs & Alcohol

Aug 25: According to preliminary data from the BC Coroners Service, 138 people in the province died due to suspected use of toxic drugs in June, approximately 4.6 deaths per day. Through the first six months of 2026, 81% of unregulated drug deaths occurred inside in places such as private residences (53%) and other residences such as social and supportive housing, SROs, shelters, and other locations (28%), and 18% occurred in outdoor places such as vehicles, sidewalks, streets, and parks.

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

Environmental

Aug 27: British Columbia is overhauling its forest management system. The proposed Working Forest Landscape Model consists of three management zones supporting a coordinated approach to land use and stewardship: a Working-Forest Zone prioritizing production of timber for commercial harvesting; a Multiple-Use Zone focused on restoration and enhancement of ecosystem functions; and a Conservation and Protection Zone to ensure biodiversity through protected habitat and conservation networks.

CASES

Workplace Harassment: WestJet Shells Out \$4.5 Million to Settle Flight Attendants' Class Action

A British Columbia court has approved a \$4.5 million settlement of a workplace harassment class action lawsuit against WestJet filed by approximately 3,400 current and former flight attendants. In addition to being a class action, the case is noteworthy because the claims were based not on OHS or tort law but breach of the airline's contractual duty to ensure flight attendants a harassment-free workplace. WestJet talked a good game about preventing harassment but didn't make the necessary efforts to deliver on those promises, the plaintiffs claim. As part of the settlement, WestJet will have to hire an independent third party to evaluate workplace harassment prevalence, underreporting, and the effectiveness of its current reporting channels [[Lewis v WestJet Airlines Ltd.](#), 2026 BCSC 1547 (CanLII), August 10, 2026].

Action Point: Don't assume workers will tell you if they're being harassed. Use the OHS Insider [Assessment Questionnaire template](#) to uncover hidden harassment, bullying, and stalking problems at your workplace.

Material Handling: Home Improvement Store Fined +\$75,000 for High-Risk Storage Rack Violations

WorkSafeBC inspectors inspecting a home improvement store's lumber yard issued a stop-use order for pallet storage racks that have rusted and bent arms, missing locking pins, and sections not anchored to the floor. A stop-use order was issued. The store was fined \$75,277 for failing to ensure that the storage racks were capable of supporting the items stored on them, installed by a qualified person, and regularly inspected for damage, as well as for not ensuring that the instructions from the manufacturer or an engineer for loading, unloading, and maintaining the storage racks were available to workers [*Pro Builders Supply Ltd./Home Hardware*].

Action Point: Use the OHSI [storage rack inspection checklist](#) to avoid similar violations at your workplace.