

Federal

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Transportation Safety

Jul 13: Transport Canada opened applications for proposals for funding to improve safety at railway crossings and along railway corridors under two streams of the Rail Safety Improvement Program. August 21 is the deadline [to apply](#) for Education and Awareness stream funding, and September 4 is the deadline [to apply](#) for Infrastructure, Technology, and Research stream funding.

Training

Jun 22: The federal government published revised safety training regulations for railway workers that will take effect in 2028. Highlights of the new [*Railway Personnel Training and Qualifications Regulations*](#): i. Addition of remote control locomotive operators and rail traffic controllers to the list of positions designated as critical for safe railway operations; ii. Expanded training requirements for certification to work in a safety critical position; iii. Addition of Crew Resource Management to required safety training for railway workers; iv. New requirement that workers with less than two years of experience in a safety critical position have access to somebody with more experience at all times; and v. New recordkeeping requirements for training, examinations, and evaluations.

Emergency Response

Jul 8: Transport Canada reminded the public that flying a drone within 9.3 km (5 nautical miles) of wildfires is not only highly dangerous but also illegal. Airspace surrounding wildfires is restricted to aircraft involved in wildfire response. Drone pilots who break the rules could face significant penalties, including jail, fines, and Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) of up to \$3,000 for individuals and \$15,000 for corporations.

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

Infectious Illness

Jul 20: As of today, any foreign national who was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo within the past 21 days is banned from entering Canada due to the threat of Ebola. From now through August 29, Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and foreign travelers seeking to enter Canada who've been in the Congo, Uganda, or South Sudan within the previous 21 days must undergo assessment for Ebola upon arrival.

Action Point: Find out [whether fear of Ebola infection is grounds for an OHS work refusal](#).

Respiratory Protection

Jul 7: Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) issued a [Hazard Alert](#)

warning of Legionella bacteria in the workplace. When inhaled, the bacterium causes Legionnaires' disease, a severe form of pneumonia or lung inflammation. Legionella may be present in water-cooled industrial and commercial air conditioners, stagnant potable water pipes, decorative water displays, faucets, and humidifiers.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [Respiratory Protection Equipment Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site to safeguard against biohazards and other airborne contaminants.

New Laws

Jul 9: Of the 1,488 Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program inspections carried out by the federal government from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, 12% found employers to be non-compliant, resulting in over \$10.2 million in monetary penalties issued. That's more than double last year's total of \$4.5 million. Thirty employers were also banned from the Program.

New Laws

Aug 2: The federal government ended public consultations on *Canada Labour Code* reforms. While most of the [proposed changes](#) affect collective bargaining and labour relations, the government is also seeking feedback on employment standards issues, including paid medical leave.

New Laws

Jul 7: Ottawa launched its new Small Business Procurement Program (SBPP) designed to make it easier for small businesses to compete for and procure contracts from the federal government. The federal government purchases more than \$37 billion in goods, services, and construction each year. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent about 47.2% of private-sector gross domestic product (GDP) and employ 63.6% of the private-sector workforce.

New Laws

Jun 17: First Reading for [Private Member Bill C-291](#), proposing to amend the *Department of Industry Act* to require the government to engage in a small business impact assessment for every legislative initiative that could have a potentially significant impact on Canadian small businesses. The Bill is unlikely to pass.

New Laws

Jul 17: The federal government announced that it's expanding the Canada Child Benefit (CCB). Starting this month, the CCB will provide families with up to \$8,157 per child under the age of 6 and up to \$6,883 per child aged 6 to 17. That's a year-to-year increase of up to \$160 per child under age 6 and up to \$135 per child age 6 to 17.

Industry Challenges

Jul 31: The federal government imposed a temporary (200 days) 25% surtax on imports of certain wood cabinets and vanities, pending the results of a Canadian International Trade Tribunal safeguard inquiry to determine if increased imports are causing, or threatening to cause, serious injury to Canadian wood manufacturers.

The Tribunal is expected to finish the inquiry and issue recommendations by January 15, 2027. If it finds no injury, the surtax, which doesn't cover trade partners the U.S., Mexico, Israel, and Chile, will end immediately.

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

New Laws

Jul 27: The federal government launched public consultations on [Bill C-35](#), which was tabled in Parliament last month. The legislation bans the import of goods produced by forced labour. Under the Bill, the Minister of Foreign Affairs would establish a list of goods in respect for which there are reasonable grounds to suspect are produced by forced labour. Deadline to comment: August 21.

Workplace Violence

Jun 17: [Bill C-225](#) amending the *Criminal Code* to create new offences for engaging in intimate partner violence and ban peace officers from releasing persons arrested for an intimate partner offence if they've committed such an offence in the last five years or are at large on a release order for such an offence, received Royal Assent.

Action Point: Domestic and sexual 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.

Workplace Violence

Jul 16: The federal government announced that it will invest \$607.4 million over four years, beginning in 2027-28, to continue the implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence. Launched in 2022, the initiative is a 10-year plan, launched in 2022, that brings together federal, provincial, and territorial governments working towards ridding Canada of gender-based violence.

CASES

Drugs & Alcohol: Onboard Drug Inspection of Officers' Bunks Is Valid Safety Measure

A merchant shipping company performed a surprise inspection of officers' cabins using drug sniffing resulting in the seizure of alcohol and cannabis products. The union cried foul, contending that the cabins were the officers' "homes" and that the random, warrantless, and unannounced search violated their privacy expectations. The company insisted the inspection was a reasonable safety measure given the dangers, not to mention illegality, of officers being high at sea. The federal arbitrator dismissed the grievance, finding that the search violated neither the law nor the collective agreement. And the company's interest in ensuring safety and complying with shipping laws onboard sobriety requirements outweighed the officers' privacy rights [[Canadian Merchant Service Guild v. Desgagnés Marine Cargo Inc.](#), 2026 CanLII 69369 (CA SA), July 10, 2026].

Action Point: Random testing is difficult to justify, even for safety-sensitive workers.

The key to this case is the setting aboard a merchant ship. Find out how to implement a [Drugs and Alcohol Testing Policy](#) at your own workplace.

Work Distractions: Using Personal Cel Phone on Job Is Just Cause to Fire Employee on Last Chance

Air Canada terminated a Cargo department employee for violating his Last Chance Agreement (LCA) by using a personal electronic device in a restricted area while operating potentially hazardous equipment. Even though it excluded a screenshot taken during a Microsoft Teams videoconference, the federal arbitrator found ample evidence that the employee was talking on his cell phone while in a tractor in an active work area. This was also a clear violation of the LCA for which Air Canada wasn't required to show any lenience [[Air Canada v Iam, District Lodge 140](#), 2026 CanLII 70770 (CA LA), June 26, 2026].

Action Point: One reason Air Canada won is that it had clear written rules banning workers from using cell phones, headsets, and other personal devices that could interfere with communication or cause distractions that lead to accidents and injuries. Find out how to implement an effective [Mobile Devices in the Workplace Policy](#) at your workplace.