

# British Columbia

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Airborne Contaminants

Jun 26: WorkSafeBC is proposing a new 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) of 0.2 ppm exposure limit for benzene and to eliminate the current 15-minute short-term exposure limit (STEL). The change will harmonize BC standards with the European Union's (EU's) binding occupational exposure limit value (OELV). Deadline [to comment](#): July 31.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound [Airborne Contaminant Exposure Control Plan](#) at your workplace.

### Heat Stress

Jun 16: With temperatures climbing and dry conditions continuing, WorkSafeBC [reminded](#) employers to plan ahead for summer weather hazards, including heat stress, UV exposure, and wildfire smoke, especially if they rely on workers to perform outdoor operations.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement an effective [Heat Stress Safety & Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

### Transportation Safety

Jun 9: New drivers in British Columbia can now take the knowledge test required for a Learner's licence online, at a time and location that works for them. The new online testing option will especially help people living in rural and remote communities because it eliminates the need to travel to an ICBC office and pass the test in person to get a full driver's licence.

### Industry Challenges

July 24: July 24 is the deadline [to comment](#) on [proposed OHS Regulations \(Part 20\) amendments](#) that would add comprehensive new safety requirements for shotcrete backing at construction project sites.

### Industry Challenges

Jun 8: The Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) will receive \$20 million from the province this year to help develop new and innovative forest practices. In addition to strengthening wildfire prevention and local jobs, the money will support 60 forest enhancement projects delivered by First Nations, local governments, community forests, woodlot operators, forestry companies, and other organizations working to improve the long-term health and resilience of BC's forests.

### Industry Challenges

July 7: July 7 is the deadline to [comment](#) on proposed regulations to implement BC's new *Construction Prompt Payment Act* to ensure fair, on-time payment for contractors and subcontractors. Questions on the table include whether implementation should occur all at once or in phases, rules for when invoices,

notices and payments are considered delivered or made, calculation of deadlines and business days, and interest rates for late payments.

### **Training**

Jun 29: BC students and workers can now [apply](#) for 2026-2027 Future Skills Grants of up to \$3,500 for career training opportunities in clean energy, construction, health care, mining, and other high-demand sectors. Since launching in 2023, the future skills grant has enabled more than 16,500 learners to receive short-term skills training at public post-secondary institutions across the province.

### **Drugs & Alcohol**

Jun 11: The BC Coroners Service reported that 119 people in the province died due to suspected use of toxic drugs in the month of April, roughly four deaths per day. Roughly 68% of drug death victims in the province in 2026 were between age 30 and 59, and 76% were male. Since 2021, the death rate among individuals 60 and older has remained relatively stable, while the death rate among those between 19 and 59 has declined significantly.

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

### **Environmental**

Jul 1: A new government agency combining several compliance and enforcement functions from natural-resource ministries officially began operations. The BC Compliance and Enforcement Agency (BC-CEA) will take on the functions of the BC Conservation Officer Service (Ministry of Environment and Parks), Natural Resource Officer Service (Ministry of Forests), Compliance and Environmental Enforcement Branch (Ministry of Environment and Parks), Compliance and Enforcement (Environmental Assessment Office), Service Transformation Branch (Ministry of Environment and Parks), and Regulatory Effectiveness and Sector Integration Branch (Ministry of Environment and Parks). It will also issue administrative monetary penalties for the Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals, and BC Parks, as well as licensing sanctions under the *Wildlife Act* for hunters and anglers.

### **Environmental**

July 1: New *Environmental Management Act* site remediation fees took effect in BC with responsible parties paying a flat fee ranging from \$5,000 to \$30,000 for most site remediation services. Site registry searches will now be free for those seeking information about the environmental condition of land. Fees to download documents will range, but will generally be \$150 or less.

## **CASES**

### **Due Diligence: Relying on Experienced Supervisor Isn't Enough**

WorkSafeBC inspectors fined a siding contractor nearly \$20,000 after observing workers at a height without fall protection even though fall protection equipment was available and their supervisor was right below them on the ground. The contractor claimed due diligence. We trained the crew in fall protection, we gave

them the necessary equipment, and we appointed an experienced person to supervise them—what more could we have done? But the BC Workers' Comp Appeals Tribunal (WCAT) wasn't impressed. Given the company's history of similar violations, it should have "treated fall protection requirements with a heightened level of scrutiny." And it couldn't document the training it claimed it provided. Relying on its experienced supervisor to ensure compliance was also a nonstarter since there was no evidence that the company regularly monitored and tested supervisors' competency and ability to abide by the safety rules. "Due diligence requires that an employer have a reasonable basis to assume that its site supervisor will supervise a work activity safely, responsibly, and in accordance with legal requirements," the WCAT reasoned [[A2501668 \(Re\)](#), 2026 CanLII 60152 (BC WCAT), June 11, 2026].

**Action Point:** The takeaway is that relying on experienced supervisors isn't enough to prove due diligence. Use the [OHSI Due Diligence Scorecard](#) and accompanying Case Summaries to draw other important lessons that you can use to assess whether your own OHS program meets the standards of due diligence.

### **Confined Spaces: Sawmill Fined \$110,000 for Worker's Death in Silo Fire**

A fire ignited inside a sawmill silo (a confined space) while a worker was inside performing pressure washing. The worker, who couldn't get out because the fire blocked access to the silo hatch, was engulfed by the flames and suffered fatal injuries. WorkSafeBC fined the employer \$110,855 for multiple high-risk OHS violations, including failing to assign an adequately trained person to administer the confined space entry program and supervise the entry and ensure that a hazard assessment and written confined space entry procedures were prepared by a qualified person. In addition, the firm didn't carry out pre-entry testing or ensure that persons assigned rescue duties were properly equipped and adequately trained [*West Fraser Mills Ltd. / Eurocan Pulp & Paper*].

**Action Point:** Don't let this happen to you! Find out how to use the [OHS Insider Confined Spaces Compliance Game Plan](#) to avoid confined space fatalities and violations.

### **Workplace Violence: Uttering a Death Threat Isn't Automatic Grounds for Termination**

Should a cleaning worker be fired for saying in Punjabi that she wanted to kill her supervisor? Absolutely, argued the employer, citing its zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence and the worker's recent suspension for insubordination. The union contended that the statement wasn't a genuine death threat but an "ill-considered utterance" in "an emotional moment." While acknowledging that expressing a desire to kill one's supervisor is a serious offence, the BC arbitrator concluded that termination was excessive in this case. Mitigating factors included the worker's 26 years of service, lack of discipline for threats or violence, and candor in admitting she made the threat, which indicated that "her rehabilitative potential is high and that she does not pose a danger to the safety of others" [*Servantage Services Corporation v Unifor Local 3000*, 2026 CanLII 62024 (BC LA), June 18, 2026].

## **Mental Stress: Employee Can Sue Company, Not Director for Disability Discrimination**

An insurance company promoted an employee to field claims adjuster in 2021. The employee was overwhelmed by the workload and sued the company and a director for mental disability discrimination, claiming that they misrepresented the responsibilities of the new position. The BC Human Rights Tribunal dismissed the claim against the director citing public policy that individual principals not be held liable for discrimination committed by their company when they're not the directing mind and don't personally influence or drive the alleged discrimination. The company, on the other hand, had no such defence and would have to stand trial [*Crocker v. Gore Mutual Insurance Company and another*, 2026 BCHRT 118 (CanLII), May 8, 2026].