

Nova Scotia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fire Safety

Apr 1: Nova Scotia officially adopted the *National Fire Code of Canada 2020*. Key changes in the [regulations](#) include the consolidation of fire safety plan requirements, establishment of classifications for widely used water-mixable liquids, and introduction of new measures for the construction of mass timber buildings.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective and legally sound [Fire Prevention Compliance Game Plan](#) to prevent fires and explosions at your workplace.

New Laws

Apr 1: To cushion the impact of inflation, Nova Scotia cut the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax (HST) by 1%, lowering the overall tax rate to 14%. It also increased the basic personal amount that residents can claim before paying taxes from \$8,744 to \$11,744, and implemented indexing of tax brackets. Earlier this year, the province cut the small business tax rate from 2.5% to 1.5% and increased the small business income threshold from \$500,000 to \$700,000.

Accessibility

Mar 21: Nova Scotia published [new regulations](#) implementing its first of 6 accessibility standards. The new Built Environment Accessibility Standard establishes rules for indoor and outdoor public, work, government, educational, and recreational spaces that will be required in Building Code Regulations governing the design and planning of new infrastructure, starting April 1, 2026.

Action Point: Find out how accessibility laws affect your OHS program and how to [ensure your workplace emergency response plan accounts for the disabled](#).

Ergonomics

Mar 15: The WCB reported that sprains and strains are the most common workplace injuries in Nova Scotia, accounting for about 60% of all injury types that result in lost time from work each year. The agency called on employers to take measures to protect workers from these and other musculoskeletal injuries.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an [Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention and Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

New Laws

Mar 26: The Assembly passed first of its kind legislation, [Bill 36, The Free Trade and Mobility within Canada Act](#), authorizing the Government of Nova Scotia to enter into reciprocity trade agreements with other provinces under which the goods manufactured and produced in those provinces would be treated the same as those produced locally in Nova Scotia. Reciprocity would also apply to professional certifications and licences.

Industry Challenges

Apr 7: Nova Scotia announced that it will invest \$7.4 million to extend the interim farm wine program for another 2 years. The interim wine support is modelled on the Wine Sector Support Program through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. There are 22 registered grape farm wineries in Nova Scotia.

Workplace Violence

Apr 1: Effective today, paid domestic violence leave under the Nova Scotia *Labour Standards Code* increases from 3 to 5 days. To be eligible, employees must have at least 3 months of service. Eligible employees are also entitled to up to 16 continuous weeks of domestic violence leave and 5 additional unpaid days, which may be continuous or intermittent.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [domestic violence prevention and response policy](#) at your workplace.

New Laws

Feb 21: Newly tabled [Private Member Bill 31](#), which is unlikely to pass, would amend the Nova Scotia *Labour Standards Code* to provide employees paid leave for a personal illness, injury or medical emergency of themselves and for the personal injury, medical emergency or death of a family member.

CASES

Workplace Harassment: Fetishizing Asian Women Is Just Cause to Terminate Problematic Worker

The last straw for a night shift shelf stocker with a history of disciplinary infractions was deliberately violating the store's Respectful Workplace Policy by sexually harassing, fetishizing, and objectifying Asian women, such as by telling colleagues that he "loved to have sex" with them. That coupled with evidence of neglect of duty and disobedience was enough to persuade the Nova Scotia arbitrator that the store had just cause to terminate [[Fenerty v Sobeys Capital Incorporated](#), 2025 NSLB 30 (CanLII), March 7, 2025].

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