

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fall Protection

Apr 16: WorkSafeBC reported that from 2020 to 2024, there were over 5,400 injury claims in the construction sector from falls from elevation, including almost 1,900 serious injuries and 35 fatalities. Over 1,000 construction workers were injured in falls from elevation last year. The agency issued 152 administrative penalties for inadequate fall protection in 2024 alone, totaling \$1,069,720.

Action Point: Find out how to prevent fall injury and workers' comp claims by implementing a legally sound [Fall Protection Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

Transportation Safety

Apr 16: The BC Assembly tabled [Bill 12](#) requiring motorcyclists to complete a new Motorcyclist Licensing Program, which includes stricter safety measure rules for protective gear, to get their licence. If and when the Bill passes, the government will have to create regulations setting out the new safety requirements.

Transportation Safety

Apr 16: Newly tabled [Bill 12](#) proposes changes to make the Graduated Licensing Program simpler and more accessible to Indigenous, rural and remote communities by, among other things, removing the requirement for a second road test to obtain a Class 5 licence. Drivers eligible to move to a Class 5 licence will instead be subject to a new 12-month restriction period, during which they must demonstrate safe driving behaviour to progress.

Radiation

May 8: *OHS Regulations* require that lasers used in health care be installed, operated, and maintained in accordance with CSA Z386-01, *Laser Safety in Health Care Facilities*. But CSA recently replaced that standard with new CSA Z7001-24, *Safe use of energy-based medical and surgical devices in health care*. WorkSafeBC published new OHS guidelines clarifying that employers should follow the new standard. **Exception:** The old CSA Z386-01 standards still apply to exposure limits, installation, operation and maintenance of lasers.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [Ionizing Radiation Safety and Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

Occupational Health

May 7: Second Reading for [Bill 11](#) adding new language to the BC *Employment Standards Act* that bans employers from asking or requiring employees to provide a doctor's note or similar document for health-related short-term absences. Under current rules, employers may request "reasonably sufficient proof" that an employee is sick.

New Laws

Apr 14: BC updated the Provincial Nominee Program in response to Ottawa's decision to cut the province's 2025 allocation in half. To make the most of its 4,000 nominations, the province will process the majority of its application inventory and accept approximately 1,100 new applications, mainly for doctors, nurses, and other healthcare services positions.

New Laws

Apr 10: The Premier ordered BC ministries, health authorities, and Crown corporations to review all contracts with U.S. companies and cancel them "wherever possible." The directive also orders agencies to exclude U.S. suppliers under the BC government's goods and services catalogue, cancel subscriptions to U.S. publications and non-essential software and avoid non-essential travel to the U.S.

New Laws

May 7: Legislation ([Bill 7](#)) is working its way through the Assembly that would enable BC to fight back against U.S. tariffs by : i. removing or revising barriers impeding interprovincial trade; ii. imposing tolls/fees on non-Canadian commercial vehicles using provincial public infrastructure such as highways; and iii. directing public-sector bodies to exclude U.S. suppliers when procuring goods and services.

New Laws

May 1: Newly tabled [Bill 15](#) would establish a new system making it faster, cheaper, and easier for construction companies to get permits for schools, hospitals, and other high-priority infrastructure improvement projects in BC, to be run by a newly created Ministry of Infrastructure.

Workers' Comp

Jun 6: June 6th is the deadline to [comment](#) on [proposed policy changes](#) affecting how WorkSafeBC determines whether a worker "would retire" for purposes of workers' comp laws providing that benefits be paid out periodically until either the worker's disability ends or earlier if WorkSafeBC believes that the worker "would retire."

Workers' Comp

Apr 9: WorkSafeBC announced that the Board of Directors has approved amendments to remove biceps tendon rupture (with no surgical correction) fixed disability ratings from the Permanent Disability Evaluation Schedule (Appendix 3). Result: The rating for a biceps tendon rupture won't depend on whether surgical repair was undertaken, effective for all decisions made on or after July 4, 2025.

Environmental

Apr 29: BC continues to make good progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, according to the government's newly released [2024 Climate Change Accountability Report](#). Emissions have remained relatively stable since 2007 and are projected to decline by 20% by 2030. Emissions per person are down by more than 21% and emissions per unit of GDP are down by more than 30%. Zero-emission vehicles made up nearly 1 in 4 new vehicle sales in 2023, a year-over-year increase of 25%; heat pump installations also increased by 67% over 2022 levels.

CASES

Drugs & Alcohol: Twisted Ankle Not Significant Enough to Justify Post-Incident Testing

A painter at a liquefied natural gas plant construction site tripped and rolled his ankle. Although embarrassed by his own awkwardness, the painter reported the injury to a supervisor as required by the site's workplace injury reporting policy. But as the saying goes, no good deed goes unpunished. The painter's explanation of what happened didn't sit right with the supervisors who suspected that he might have been drunk or high. So, after investigating the incident, they demanded that the painter submit to post-incident drug and alcohol testing. The tests came back negative, but the union filed a grievance claiming that the company didn't have just cause to test. The BC arbitrator agreed. The incident wasn't significant to justify invading the painter's privacy and bodily integrity. Trips and twisted ankles happen at worksites all the time, it reasoned. And even if the incident had been significant, the investigation was "inadequate" because the investigators didn't interview witnesses or get the painter's side of the story. Result: The company had to pay the painter \$2,000 in damages [[*Altrad Services Ltd. v International Union of Painters And Allied Trades, Local 138*](#), 2025 CanLII 31346 (BC LA), April 10, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to create a legally sound [Drugs and Alcohol Testing Policy](#) for your workplace that addresses not only post-incident but other bases of testing.

Excavation: Contractor Didn't Determine Location of Underground Utilities Before Digging

WorkSafeBC investigators responding to a gas leak incident caused by an excavator's striking and damaging an underground gas line fined the employer \$98,695 for failing to accurately determine the location of all underground utilities before excavating with powered equipment. The company didn't review the BC 1 Call documentation or complete hand-digging to determine the location of the underground utility, the agency noted [[*Bay Hill Contracting Ltd.*](#)].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a 10-step [Excavations Safety and Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace to prevent what happened to this company from happening to yours.