

# British Columbia

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Sanitation & Housekeeping

Oct 1: [New OHS rules](#) for washroom facilities at construction sites officially took effect today, including the requirement that toilets be situated within enclosed space that provides privacy for the user, is illuminated and ventilated, and, if practicable, heated. In addition, there must also be a handwashing facility within or close to the enclosed space.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a [Sanitation and Toilets Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

### Airborne Hazards

Aug 20: WorkSafeBC [proposed new OHS requirements](#) (under Part 6 of the OHS Regulations) to ensure safe use, handling and storage of a group of substances called toxic process gases (TPGs), which include anhydrous ammonia, chlorine, chlorine dioxide, ethylene oxide, ozone, and sulfur dioxide. The proposal also includes a new definition of TPGs. Deadline to comment: October 22.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement an effective [Respiratory Protection Equipment Compliance Game Plan](#) to protect workers against exposure to TPGs and other toxic materials at your site.

### Airborne Hazards

Aug 20: New or revised ACGIH Threshold Limit Values were added to the BC Table of Exposure Limits for Excluded Substances in *Prevention Manual* Item [OHS Policy R5.48-1](#) for the following substances: i. Copper naphthenate, Inhalable Fraction & Vapour; ii. Nicotine; and iii. Nicotine, Inhalable Fraction & Vapour.

### Combustible Dusts

Sep 26: [Public comment](#) ended on WorkSafeBC's [proposed changes](#) to Part 6 of the OHS Regulations for combustible dusts. Highlights: i. New exemption for employers whose dust poses low risk to workers; ii. Clarification that rules cover an "employer who generates or handles dust"; and iii. Clarification that training and instruction need be provided only to workers "who could be exposed" to a combustion risk.

**Action Point:** Take 3 steps to [protect workers from hazardous dusts](#).

### Respiratory Protection

Sep 26: Comments closed on WorkSafeBC's [proposal](#) to replace the reference to the 1993 edition of CSA Standard Z94.4 for the selection, care, and use of respirators with a reference to the 2018 edition of the standard. Respiratory protection equipment requirements appear in Parts 8 and 31 of the *OHS Regulations*.

### Fire Safety

Sep 3: With wildfires blazing across much of the province, WorkSafeBC reminded employers to take measures to protect workers against the health risks of wildfire

smoke. Specifically, employers should perform a hazard assessment that considers the workplace's location, local weather conditions, work tasks carried out and emergency response and evacuation plans in place.

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

### **Industry Challenges**

Aug 26: The Ministry of Forests began using a new method for calculating forest carbon protections during timber supply reviews (TSRs) in determining the allowable annual cut (AAC) for each of the province's 37 timber supply areas and 34 tree farm licences. TSRs are required at least once every 10 years.

### **New Laws**

Aug 26: BC will receive over \$326 million in federal Canada Community-Building Fund assistance in 2025 for housing, public transit, water systems, bridges, roads, and other infrastructure construction projects to be delivered via 3 program streams: the Strategic Priorities Fund, Metro Vancouver Regional Fund, and Community Works Fund.

### **Drugs & Alcohol**

Aug 29: BC received the \$936 million initial payment from the historic \$32.5 billion litigation settlement with tobacco companies. The settlement agreement requires the tobacco companies to pay the province over \$3.6 billion in total over the next 18 years.

**Action Point:** Take 5 steps to [prevent workplace smoking](#) and vaping and avoid fines under smoke-free laws.

### **Environmental**

Aug 12: The CleanBC Industry program is investing \$35 million to support the efforts of companies to adopt cleaner technologies and make the transition to electrification and net-zero operations. Applications for the 2025 round are open via 2 funding streams: [Innovation Accelerator \(IA\)](#) (deadline to apply: Sept. 24), and [Feasibility Studies \(FS\)](#) (deadline to apply: Sept. 21).

### **Environmental**

Aug 27: The federal government announced that it's providing nearly \$22.7 million in funding for 8 projects to improve electric vehicle (EV) charging availability in BC. The money will be used to install more than 480 EV chargers along main travel routes, in public places, at workplaces and in multi-unit residential buildings.

## **CASES**

### **Workplace Harassment: Failing to Rein in Coworker's Sex Harassment Costs Company \$65,000**

For 6 months, an employee endured sexual harassment and bullying by a coworker named Joe. The harassment included sexual innuendos, inappropriate touching, derogatory language, and one incident in which Joe actually dropped his pants and

invited her to service him orally. With her complaints to supervisors falling on deaf ears, the employee decided she had to quit for her own safety. She also sued the company. The BC Human Rights Commission ruled that Joe committed sexual harassment discrimination and that the company was responsible for his conduct.

**Result:** It awarded the employee nearly \$30,000 in lost wages and \$35,000 in damages to her dignity, feelings and self-respect [[\*Knowles v. Ontime Moving Corporation\*](#), 2025 BCHRT 183 (CanLII), August 8, 2025].

**Action Point:** Don't let this happen to you or your workers! Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Violence and Harassment Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

### **Workplace Harassment: OK to Fire Cook for Sexually Harassing Female Subordinates Half His Age**

The union admitted that a male cook in his 60s sexually harassed multiple female dietary assistants in their early 20s but blamed the problem on the workplace culture in which sexual harassment was "tolerated, normalized, and in some cases actively engaged in by those in positions of authority." But the BC arbitrator was unwilling to let the cook off the hook. Although this was the first incident of discipline, the cook's practice of making sexually inappropriate remarks and touching vulnerable women subordinates less than half his age was a pattern that persisted over almost the full 3 1/2 years of his employment. Not apologizing or expressing any regret for his conduct did little to help the case for reinstatement [[\*Well Being Services Ltd. dba Summerland Seniors Village v Hospital Employees' Union\*](#), 2025 CanLII 83073 (BC LA), August 7, 2025].