

# British Columbia

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Airborne Hazards

Oct 22: Comments closed on WorkSafeBC's [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.

**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.

### New Laws

Sep 19: BC and the federal government expanded the Build Your Own Future program, originally established to support the forestry sector, to all industries affected by the Trump tariffs. The BYOF offers 5-day business bootcamps, with one-on-one coaching and mentorship to help displaced workers transition into entrepreneurship. Participants who complete the program are eligible for a \$5,000 grant to help cover startup costs.

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

### New Laws

Sep 19: BC's newly launched Rural and Remote Employment Initiatives Fund (RREIF) will furnish \$5 million in support for communities in northern and remote regions to conduct labour-market studies assessing the effects of the Trump tariffs on local employment needs. RREIF will also fund business advisory services enabling organizations to diversify and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

### Industry Challenges

Oct 7: BC proposed new legislation ([Bill 20](#)) to ensure that construction contractors, subcontractors and workers get paid fairly and on time. Based on models that have worked well in Ontario and Alberta, the law sets specific timelines for payment on construction projects and establishes a new mechanism for resolving payment disputes quickly via an independent adjudicator.

### Industry Challenges

Sep 19: The BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund announced that it will provide up to \$2.5 million for 9 wood-product manufacturing businesses to plan or complete capital projects such as building construction or upgrades and the purchase of new equipment. The BCMJF has driven over \$588 million into forestry-product manufacturing, leading to the direct creation and protection of nearly 3,600 forestry-sector jobs, many in regional, remote and Indigenous communities.

### Training

Sep 11: BC announced that it's investing \$4.7 million to fund the addition of 65 nurse

practitioner training seats to 3 NP programs across the province, including 30 seats at the University of British Columbia, 20 seats at the University of Northern British Columbia and 15 seats at the University of Victoria. The province has also added 362 registered nursing seats, 40 registered psychiatric nursing seats and 180 licensed practical nurse seats at 17 public post-secondary institutions.

### **Workplace Violence**

Oct 6: The BC Assembly tabled and will likely pass [Bill 18](#) requiring post-secondary institutions to implement a sexual violence policy that, among other things, lists procedures for making and responding to disclosures about members of the institutional community, including discipline against those found to have engaged in wrongdoing. Institutions must also post the policy on their website.

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

### **Workplace Violence**

Sep 17: BC will receive \$18 million from the federal government this fiscal year to support its Gender-Based Violence Action Plan. The money is in addition to the annual provincial funding of more than \$60 million supporting more than 475 victim-service and violence-against-women programs throughout the province, including 70 new sexual-assault prevention programs, and 5 centres for sexual-assault victims.

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

### **Privacy**

Oct 9: Second Reading for [Bill 17](#) to increase the minimum penalties to victims of *Intimate Images Protection Act* violations from \$5,000 to as high as \$75,000.

Enacted 2 years ago, the Act enables people to apply online to the Civil Resolution Tribunal to get their intimate images off the internet, stop their distribution and seek monetary compensation from the person, social media company or website that shared the image.

**Action Point:** Find out how to create and implement an effective [Cyberbullying Prevention Policy](#) at your workplace.

### **Drugs & Alcohol**

Oct 9: According to preliminary data, there were 153 toxic drug deaths in BC in July and another 149 in August. The Fraser and Vancouver Coastal health authorities have accounted for 55% of all such deaths during the year so far. Fentanyl continues to be the most-common substance detected in toxicological testing having been detected in 70% of victims.

**Action Point:** Many overdose fatalities occur in the workplace. Find out [how to implement a workplace Naloxone Program to](#) prevent opioid overdose deaths at your site.

### **Drugs & Alcohol**

Oct 8: BC proposed first-of-its-kind legislation, [Bill 24](#), empowering the province to take legal action to hold vaping product manufacturers and wholesalers

accountable for public harms resulting from misleading promotion of vaping products. The Bill is patterned on the legislation that paved the way for the recent \$3.6 billion landmark settlement against tobacco companies.

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

### **Workers' Comp**

Nov 1: WorkSafeBC will no longer mail paper statements. Employers that have any credit or debit balances in their account will instead receive an email notification advising them to check their statement online. However, if your payroll report is currently mailed to you, you'll receive both the paper report and email notification until the end of December.

### **Environmental**

Sep 22: From now through December 12, BC will be holding [online surveying](#) to gather public feedback on [a proposal](#) to speed up the processing and approval of water management permits. Key changes include new exemptions for construction dewatering, expanded eligibility for stream restoration and use of offset payments to support wetland conservation.

## **CASES**

### **Workers' Comp: Top Court Upholds Denial of Mental Injury Benefits Claim**

A powerline technician claimed he was suspended and eventually fired from his job for complaining about being bullied by his co-workers. After achieving partial victory on the reprisal claim, the technician sought workers' comp benefits for mental injury. The WCB rejected the claim, finding that the technician's mental disorder was caused by neither a "traumatic event" nor exposure to a "significant workplace stressor." The case went all the way to the BC Court of Appeal, which ruled against the technician on procedural grounds because he waited too long to appeal [\[Lawrence v. British Columbia \(Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal\), 2025 BCCA 343 \(CanLII\), October 6, 2025\]](#).

**Action Point:** Find out about [workers' comp coverage](#) of gradual onset and traumatic mental stress.

### **Material Handling: Rebar Tower Collapse Results in \$140,000 Fine to Prime Contractor**

A construction worker removing level bars near the top of a rebar tower fell to the ground when the tower collapsed. WorkSafeBC fined the prime contractor \$140,209 after determining that the structure wasn't adequately supported and for failing to ensure that there were no written instructions from a professional engineer regarding the bracing of the tower. The firm also failed to ensure that all partially assembled structures were supported as necessary to safely withstand any loads likely to be imposed on them [\[Bird Construction GP Limited & Bird Construction et al.\]](#).

## **Privacy: Doctors Can't Bring Class Privacy Action Against MD Internet Ratings Website**

A physician filed a class action privacy lawsuit on behalf of BC health professionals against the RateMDs.com website that solicits and publishes profiles of doctors across Canada, including their name, contact information, ratings, reviews, and comments from anonymous third parties. The lower court gave the green light for a class action, but the BC Court of Appeal dismissed the case after finding that the professionals didn't have a legally valid privacy claim. Violating personal privacy is a tort subject to money damages, the high court explained, but only when it involves information to which an individual has a reasonable expectation of privacy. Those who publicly offer professional services on the Internet are routinely subject to scrutiny in the form of public reviews on sites like Yelp, Google, and Facebook. "It simply cannot be said that a health professional has a reasonable expectation that information about their services is private, and that they can exercise control over which websites will be permitted to publish this type of information," the Court concluded [[\*RateMDs Inc. v. Bleuler\*](#), 2025 BCCA 329 (CanLII), September 22, 2025].