

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Respiratory Protection

Nov 10: WorkSafeBC is [proposing to revise](#) OHS requirements for use of tight-fitting respirators (under Section 8.39 of the Regulations) by removing the term “clean shaven” and replacing it with new language requiring employers to ensure that nothing is allowed to intrude between the skin of a worker’s face or neck and the respirator seal, or otherwise interfere with the proper functioning of the respirator.

Deadline to comment: December 12.

Action Point: Requiring workers who use tight-fitting respirators to be clean shaven can expose you to discrimination liability risks when shaving would violate a worker’s religion. Find out more about workers’ rights to safety policy exemptions and other reasonable accommodations and [how far you must bend PPE rules to accommodate workers’ religion](#).

Fire Safety

Dec 12: That’s the deadline to comment on [proposed amendments](#) to Part 31 of the OHS Regulation to align the definition of firefighter with the definition in the *Workers’ Compensation Act* (Act) and clarify that the employer and worker obligations under this Part apply to society fire brigades and volunteer firefighters.

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.

Work Injuries

Oct 14: Serious injury rates in manufacturing were 44% above the average across all BC industries over the past 5 years when over 26,000 manufacturing workers lost work time due to injury, including over 4,300 serious injuries. Most common accidents: overexertion, being struck by or against objects, falls on the same level, and getting caught in machinery.

Action Point: Find out how to prevent these kinds of injuries by implementing a legally sound [Machine Guarding Compliance Game Plan at](#) your workplace.

Transportation Safety

Oct 30: Royal Assent for [Bill 12](#) amending the *Motor Vehicle Act* giving the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia authority to impose minimum waiting periods and mandatory driving, vision, and other testing for novice drivers seeking their first driver’s license for different categories of motor vehicles. The new requirements won’t take effect until regulations are issued.

Occupational Illness

Oct 30: [Bill 30](#) providing up to 27 weeks’ unpaid leave for employees who can’t work for at least a one-week period due to serious illness or injury passed Second Reading. Leave must be taken during a 52-week period and employees must obtain a doctor or nurse practitioner certificate verifying medical need for leave and dates it’s

required.

Industry Challenges

Oct 21: New legislation ([Bill 20](#)) to ensure that construction contractors, subcontractors and workers get paid fairly and on time passed Second Reading. Based on models that have worked well in Ontario and Alberta, the BC law sets specific timelines for payment on construction projects and establishes a new mechanism for resolving payment disputes quickly via an independent adjudicator.

Privacy

Oct 30: Newly passed [Bill 17](#) increases the minimum penalties payable to victims of *Intimate Images Protection Act* violations from \$5,000 to as high as \$75,000 received Royal. 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.

Workplace Violence

Oct 30: The BC Assembly passed [Bill 18](#) requiring post-secondary institutions to implement a sexual violence policy that, among other things, sets out procedures for making and responding to disclosures about a member of the institutional community, including imposition of discipline against those found to have engaged in wrongdoing. Post-secondary institutions would also have to make their sexual violence policy publicly available on their websites.

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

Workplace Violence

Oct 24: The Ministry of Children and Family Development will provide \$750,000 in federal funding to expand the reach of domestic-violence intervention programs as part of the Canada-British Columbia bilateral agreement to end gender-based violence in the province.

Action Point: Domestic violence can happen not just at home but the victim's workplace. Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Domestic Violence Prevention Plan](#) to protect your own workers.

Drugs & Alcohol

Nov 3: According to preliminary Coroners Service data, 158 people died of unregulated drug toxicity in British Columbia in September 2025. That's roughly 5.3 deaths per day. Two health authorities, Fraser and Vancouver Coastal health authorities have reported 56% of all toxic drug deaths in the province this year, with 406 and 366, respectively. The cities with the most deaths are Vancouver (314), Surrey (137), and Greater Victoria (93).

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 22: BC is 2 steps away from passing 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.

Environmental

Dec 12: That's the final day of [online surveying](#) 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

Emergency Response: Provincial Government Fined \$759,368 for Wildfire Fighting Violations

British Columbia fined itself \$759,368 (the fourth highest OHS fine in Canada in 2025) for multiple OHS violations stemming from 2 wildfire fighting incidents. In the first incident, a worker and supervisor were in a utility terrain vehicle that went over a steep embankment. Neither occupant was wearing a helmet and the passenger wasn't wearing a seatbelt. Result: One fatality and citations for inadequate supervision, lack of safe work procedures and training for operating the UTV, and no pre-use inspection of the vehicle. In the second incident, a crew of 5 workers became entrapped during a planned ignition operation forcing other crews to navigate off-road when their escape route was compromised. WorkSafeBC cited the government employer for lack of planning, training, supervision and communication [*Provincial Government*].

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

Workplace Harassment: OK to Find Employer Guilty of OHS Violation But Still Not Impose a Penalty

A front desk clerk filed a workplace bullying, harassment and mobbing complaint with her employer, WorkSafeBC and the union, contending that she was the victim of false accusations by her colleagues. She then took a leave of medical absence due to anxiety from the matter. The union ended up settling the grievance without getting the acknowledgement and apology the clerk wanted. Adding insult to injury, the company wouldn't let her return to work. Meanwhile, WorkSafeBC determined that the company violated its duty to provide the clerk a safe workplace and protect her from mobbing but declined to issue a penalty. The clerk appealed to the BC Court of Appeal, which found the decision not to penalize the company reasonable and refused to overturn it. It was open to the review officer to find that a violation occurred but that it didn't warrant a penalty because it wasn't intentional and didn't expose the clerk to real risk of harm, the high court reasoned [*Pereira v. British*

[Columbia \(Workers' Compensation Board\)](#), 2025 BCCA 379 (CanLII), November 5, 2025].

PPE: Worker Who Lied About Wearing Protective Gloves Gets His Job Back

Did a millwright deserve to get fired for lying when he told company safety investigators that he was wearing required cut-resistant protective gloves when he cut his finger on a clipper knife while trying to clear a jam in a veneer machine? Although it was a single act of dishonesty, the company argued that it was just cause to terminate because it involved a crucial safety matter. The BC arbitrator disagreed and reduced the penalty to a 4-week suspension. Mitigating factors: The millwright had a previously clean safety record, he apologized, admitted his lie in a second interview and expressed sincere remorse for his actions [[Cipa Lumber Co. Ltd. v United Steelworkers, Local 2009](#), 2025 CanLII 103390 (BC LA), October 7, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [hand and arm protection compliance game plan](#) at your site.