

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Incident Reporting

Nov 25: New OHS regulations took effect in October 2024 requiring employers to submit a Notice of Project (NOP) to WorkSafeBC at least 2 weeks before any tower crane work begins. The agency says it received more than 900 Notice of Project–Tower Crane submissions during the year while cautioning that crane risks remain a major concern.

Action Point: Find out about the [Notice of Project requirements](#) in each province.

Respiratory Protection

Dec 12: WorkSafeBC ended public comment on its [proposal 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.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [Respiratory Protection Equipment Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

Fire Safety

Dec 12: Comments closed 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.

New Laws

Nov 17: Look West, British Columbia’s newly launched 10-year strategic economic plan prioritizes expansion of skills training, generating growth in key sectors, achieving economic balance, and speeding up the permitting process for major infrastructure, defense, and other development projects. Target sectors include marine, aerospace, construction, innovation, life sciences, AI and quantum computing, agriculture and food processing, trade and logistics infrastructure, and the critical minerals and energy the world needs.

New Laws

Nov 19: The federal Active Transportation Fund is investing more than \$6.3 million to support active transportation improvement and planning projects across BC communities. Active transportation refers to the movement of people or goods powered by human activity and includes walking, cycling and the use of human-powered or hybrid mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, e-bikes, rollerblades,

snowshoes, cross-country skis, etc.

Training

Nov 14: BC announced that it's establishing a \$241 million fund to finance the doubling of funding for skilled trades funding by 2029. The money will be used to increase per-seat funding for apprentice programs, reduce waiting lists for critical industrial trades, facilitate workers' movement between industries and advance skilled-trades certification, beginning with crane operators. BC has a record number of registered apprentices with nearly 50,000 registered apprenticeships and over 11,000 high school participants.

Occupational Illness

Nov 27: [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 received Royal Assent and took effect. 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.

Occupational Illness

Nov 12: Newly effective employment standards regulations ban employers from asking for a sick note for a worker's first 2 health-related, short-term absences of 5 consecutive days or fewer in a calendar year. Doctor's notes are still in play to verify long-term medical absences.

Industry Challenges

Nov 27: New legislation ([Bill 20](#)) to ensure that construction contractors, subcontractors and workers get paid fairly and on time received Royal Assent. 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.

Drugs & Alcohol

Dec 3: British Columbia passed 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 3: British Columbia [reports](#) that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions declined by nearly 4% in 2023, compared to the previous year, and are now 9% below 2007 levels. Emissions per unit of GDP is 38% below 2007 levels and net GHG emissions per person are 30% below 2007 levels. Methane emissions from the oil and gas sector are down 48% from 2014, meeting the 2025 target 2 years early, and renewable fuel supply has increased by 27%, helping reduce transportation emissions. There are 210,000 zero-emission vehicles on the roads and 7,000 charging ports across the

province, the latter representing a 25% increase from 2023.

Environmental

Dec 12: [Online surveying](#) ended on [a proposal](#) to speed up the processing and approval of water management permits in British Columbia. Key changes include new exemptions for construction dewatering, expanded eligibility for stream restoration, and use of offset payments to support wetland conservation.

CASES

Workers' Compensation: Worker's Widow Gets Second Chance to Prove Case for Survivor Benefits

A worker forced to retire due to work injuries received a partial permanent functional impairment award in 2011 for loss of range of motion in the right knee, chronic pain and depression. He died in the hospital of congestive heart failure 7 years later. His widow claimed survivor benefits, contending that the pain and depression contributed to the heart disease that killed him by limiting his ability to exercise and causing him to gain weight. The Board denied the widow's claim and the WCAT rejected her appeal. But the British Columbia court ruled that the WCAT's analysis of the link among all of the various injuries and conditions was "fundamentally flawed" and sent the case back down for redetermination [[Macovei v British Columbia \(Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal\)](#), 2025 BCSC 2365 (CanLII), December 2, 2025].