

Nova Scotia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Incident Reporting

Jan 1: Newly effective *Workers' Compensation Act* amendments require employers to report workplace injuries within 2 days, rather than 5. The Nova Scotia WCB may also begin publishing the names of employers who receive administrative monetary penalties for OHS and workers' comp violations on its public website the way many other provinces do.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Incident Reporting Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

Ergonomics

Nov 28: The Nova Scotia WCB and Dept. of Labour's newly launched collaborative injury-prevention strategy sets out 3 priorities for 2025-2026: i. reducing strains and sprains, the province's most common workplace injury; ii. supporting employers in addressing psychological harm, focusing on harassment and traumatic incidents; and iii. equipping supervisors with the tools and confidence to build strong safety cultures.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an [Ergonomics Safety and Compliance Game Plan](#) to protect your workers against strains, sprains, and other musculoskeletal injuries.

Crane Safety

Nov 27: The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and WorkSafeNB announced that they will carry out joint tower crane inspections and share inspections data as part of a broader collaboration to coordinate and improve OHS enforcement in each province's respective construction sectors.

Action Point: Nova Scotia employers can use the OHS Insider [Cranes/Hoists/Lifting Device Compliance Game Plan](#) to prepare for these inspections prevent crane violations at your workplace.

Industry Challenges

Nov 24: On Dumping Day, the official opening of the lobster season, Nova Scotia called on captains and crews to make safety a top priority by monitoring weather forecasts, thoroughly inspecting vessels, ensuring that safety equipment is in good condition and easy to access, ensuring that crew members wear required life jackets and personal flotation devices and preparing for emergencies.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Drowning Protection Compliance Game Plan at](#) for your vessel or land-based workplace.

Industry Challenges

Nov 17: Nova Scotia created a new compliance unit to combat illegal activities in the fish buying and processing sector. The unit will include 4 inspectors responsible for monitoring, inspecting, and investigating regulatory compliance and cracking down

on violations via imposition of fines and suspension or revocation of licences. Earlier this year, the province increased maximum fines under the *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act* from \$100,000 to \$1 million for a first offence and up to \$2 million for a second offence.

Industry Challenges

Nov 20: Nova Scotia is earmarking \$800,000 to help private landowners and forest contractors find new, more efficient ways to harvest, transport and sell low-grade fibre that would normally go unused. Another \$1 million will go to helping woodlot owners develop and maintain access roads into their woodlots so they can harvest more wood while also cutting the risk of wildfires by reducing the amount of wood left on the ground.

New Laws

Nov 19: Nova Scotia signed on to the Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement on the Sale of Goods allowing goods lawfully sold in one Canadian jurisdiction (other than food, live animals, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or plants) to be lawfully sold in other jurisdictions without additional requirements. It also agreed to Canada Free Trade Agreement amendments establishing a financial services chapter for banks, credit unions, insurance companies, lenders, and other financial services providers.

Transportation Safety

Nov 17: Nova Scotia, the federal government, and other provinces and territories signed a memorandum of understanding to promote free trade in the interprovincial trucking sector by establishing national safety standards for steering axle weights, signage, lighting, and flags for oversized vehicles and entry level training.

Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: Effective today, workers will have 90 rather than 30 days to appeal a claim decision. The extended deadline gives workers more time to gather medical records, seek advice, and make informed decisions about appeals.

Action Point: Find out how much each province and territory is charging for [workers' compensation premiums in 2026](#).

Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: Under newly effective *Workers' Compensation Act* changes, death benefits will now extend to dependent adult children or other dependents. If the worker who dies of a work injury or illness has no dependents, benefits will go to the worker's estate. In the event of the death of a worker receiving long-term benefits and who's entitled to an annuity, the annuity will be payable to the worker's estate if there are no dependents. The Act now expressly includes common-law partners and same-sex spouses, ensuring equal access to survivor benefits for all families.

Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: Wildland firefighters and fire investigators in Nova Scotia now have the same presumptive cancer coverage as municipal firefighters. So, if they're diagnosed with a job-related cancer, their claim will be automatically presumed work-related. Coverage applies retroactively to eligible workers diagnosed before the law took

effect.

Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: Effective today, Extended Earnings Replacement Benefits can be reviewed when a worker's situation changes, which eliminates the requirement under previous rules to wait for the 3-year or 5-year review period to end.

Return To Work

Jan 1: The Nova Scotia WCB will now provide employers information about an injured worker's functional ability information, such as lifting restrictions, so they can offer modified work that's safe for the worker to perform. In addition, getting an injured worker to care, such as via ambulance, is now part of overall claims costs, rather than a separate expense for employers, which should simplify claims administration.

CASES

Reprisal: Layoff of Seasonal Worker Was Not Retaliation for Filing Workers' Compensation Claim

A delivery driver for an excavation firm claimed he was laid off in retaliation for filing a workers' compensation claim. Since the adverse action (the layoff) occurred within 6 months of the protected action (filing the workers' comp claim), the employer had the burden of proving it wasn't a reprisal. The employer, which had just acquired the company, met that burden by presenting evidence that the business was seasonal and that it planned to use university students to ensure labour would be available during the peak months of April to September. In other words, the driver's layoff was a legitimate business decision that had nothing to do with the workers' comp claim. So, the Nova Scotia arbitrator tossed the driver's reprisal complaint [[Miller v Kynock Resources Limited](#), 2025 NSLB 340 (CanLII), November 25, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to [avoid reprisals liability](#) when disciplining workers for safety violations, especially if, as in the *Miller* case, the worker on the receiving end has filed a workers' compensation claim or exercised an OHS right.