

# Nova Scotia

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Work Injuries

Jan 9: In 2025, Nova Scotia's injury rate fell from 1.38 to 1.22 per 100 workers, its lowest on record, the WCB reported. The number of time-loss days paid in 2025 also dropped from 269 to 226, another record low.

### Incident Reporting

Jan 1: Effective today, employers must report workplace injuries to the Nova Scotia WCB 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' compensation violations on its public website.

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

### Industry Challenges

Dec 17: Nova Scotia updated its [Aquaculture Licence and Lease Regulations](#).

Highlights: i. New 30-day public comment period for new aquaculture sites or expansion of existing ones; ii. New or expanded shellfish and aquatic plant farms to be approved by the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department rather than the Nova Scotia Aquaculture Review Board; and iii. Revised timelines and processes for review board handling of applications for finfish in marine areas to give applicants and other parties more time to prepare.

### Industry Challenges

Dec 22: Nova Scotia named Dalhousie University to oversee the new \$30 million Subsurface Energy Research and Development Investment Program designed to kick-start the province's onshore natural gas industry. Dalhousie will lead research efforts to better understand the nature and location of the resource and to track and develop guidelines to ensure exploration and development are done responsibly.

### New Laws

Dec 1: The Nova Scotia Labour Board updated its [Rules of Procedures](#) for handling applications, complaints and appeals under various workplace laws including the *OHS Act*, *Labour Standards Code* and *Trade Union Act*.

### Workers' Compensation

Feb 1: Reminder: Nova Scotia employers have until March 31 to submit their workers' compensation payroll reports to the WCB listing their actual numbers from 2025 and projected numbers for 2026 to avoid potential late fees, interest, and penalties.

### Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: Effective today, workers 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: Death benefits payable for a worker who dies of a work injury or illness now extend to dependent adult children and other dependents. If there are no dependents, benefits 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.

### **Workers' Compensation**

Jan 1: Effective today, wildland firefighters and fire investigators in Nova Scotia have the same presumptive cancer coverage as municipal firefighters. Translation: 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.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound [Return to Work Compliance Game Plan](#) for injured workers.

## **CASES**

### **Housekeeping & Hygiene: Handwashing Violations Don't Justify Firing Veteran Dish Washer**

The union claimed that it was too harsh for an elderly residential care facility to fire a 63-year-old dishwasher with 40 years of service for food theft and 2 instances of violating food handling hygiene rules. The Nova Scotia arbitrator agreed. Although failing to wash hands after washing dirty dishes and handling clean ones was a serious and potentially dangerous health transgression given the residents' vulnerability, it wasn't just cause for termination given the dishwasher's long and excellent service record, economic vulnerability, and evidence suggesting that the handwashing rules were unclear and inconsistently enforced. As for food theft, there was evidence that it was common practice for workers to snack on food intended for residents. Result: The

arbitrator reduced the penalty to a 4-week unpaid suspension with no loss of seniority [*Unifor Local 4606 v Northwood Inc*, 2025 CanLII 132802 (NS LA), December 19,2025].