

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ergonomics

Feb 26: Musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) remain the most common workplace injury in British Columbia, accounting for about 30% of time-loss claims and over 25% of total claims costs. WorkSafeBC accepted over 88,000 time-loss claims for MSIs from 2020 to 2024, resulting in over \$2.35 billion in claim costs. While MSIs occur in all industries, rates are highest in health care, retail, local government, restaurants, public schools, and the skilled trades. Compliance with OHS MSI requirements will be a priority for targeted WorkSafeBC inspections in 2026.

Action Point: Implementing an effective [Ergonomics Safety and Compliance Game Plan](#) is the key to protecting your workers against MSIs and your company against the workers' comp claims they lead to.

Crane Safety

Mar 3: New OHS regulations require workers who operate cranes to be registered with British Columbia Crane Safety and certified for each type of crane they use. Employers that own, maintain, repair, or operate cranes will also be subject to new permitting and licensing requirements. Seven workers have been killed in British Columbia crane incidents over the past five years.

Action Point: Use the OHS Insider [Cranes/Hoists/Lifting Device Compliance Game Plan](#) to prevent crane violations at your workplace.

Transportation Safety

Feb 26: Getting a driver's license in British Columbia will be much less of a hassle if and when the Assembly passes newly tabled [Bill 6](#) amending the *Motor Vehicle Act* to give the government authority to establish a system enabling residents to apply for, renew, or replace their licence online. Regulations will be necessary to fill in the crucial operational details.

New Laws

Mar 8: British Columbia is adopting permanent, year-round daylight savings time after clocks shift forward one hour on March 8. The permanent switchover is expected to minimize seasonal disruption, improve overall health, and reduce traffic accidents on the drive home from work during winter months. Pacific time will be set seven hours behind coordinated universal time (UTC-7), matching the current offset used during daylight saving time. Of course, you won't notice the difference until November when the normal annual "fall back" to standard time doesn't occur.

Action Point: Studies show that workplace injuries increase during the first three working days after daylight saving time begins each spring. The reason for this is the lingering fatigue and disruption to circadian rhythm that workers experience as a result of losing sleep on the night the clocks are turned ahead. So, be prepared! Find out [how to help your workers adjust to daylight savings time changes](#).

New Laws

Feb 26: Last year, British Columbia passed legislation temporarily relaxing regulatory rules barring the free flow of trade and labour with other Canadian provinces and territories. [Bill 5](#), the *Trade Recognition Act*, which is now through Second Reading, will make those rules permanent, including reciprocal recognition of professional licences and certifications issued in other jurisdictions that have adopted similar legislation.

New Laws

Mar 2: The federal Regional Tariff Response Initiative (RTRI) announced that it will invest \$13 million to support projects across British Columbia's Southern Interior designed to help businesses impacted by tariffs boost productivity, cut costs, build more resilient supply chains, and reach new markets. The RTRI is targeting the money to sectors that have been hit hardest by global trade disruptions, including forestry, equipment manufacturing, and value-added wood manufacturing.

Drugs & Alcohol

Feb 19: British Columbia's 2026 Budget allocates \$50 million to improve access to nasal naloxone, a medication that, when administered immediately and correctly, can save the life of a person that suffers an opiate drug overdose. Injectable home naloxone kits have prevented about 40,000 drug deaths in the province since 2019; now more kits will be available in easier-to-administer nasal form.

Action Point: Find out [how to implement a workplace Naloxone Program to](#) save lives and prevent opioid overdose deaths at your site.

Workers' Compensation

Mar 1: *Workers' Compensation Act* changes will add eight more cancers to the list of cancers presumed to be work-related when suffered by firefighters: skin cancer, mesothelioma, soft tissue sarcoma, as well as laryngeal, tracheal, bronchial, nose, and pharynx cancers. That list also includes 10 other forms of cancer.

Workers' Compensation

March 15 is the deadline for the second group of British Columbia employers to submit their actual 2025 payroll numbers and 2026 estimates to WorkSafeBC. The reporting deadline, which is based on the last two digits of the employer account number, for the third group is March 31.

Environmental

Feb 6: The federal government announced an investment of nearly \$10 million to help the British Columbia Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council (commonly referred to as SkillPlan) develop a national energy assessment training program for the insulator (heat and frost) Red Seal trade that will enable thousands of workers to develop the new skills required for a green economy.

CASES

Due Diligence: Corporate Officer Must Answer for Company's Environmental Violation

The president and chief operating officer denied liability for the environmental violations committed by his company, claiming he didn't know about the circumstances that led to the discharge of toxic mining chemicals into fish-populated waters. The environmental laws at issue were "strict liability" laws, meaning that a defendant can be guilty simply for committing the so-called "*actus reus*," in this case regardless of what was in their mind when they did it, reasoned the British Columbia court in upholding the officer's convictions. The province's highest court agreed. The *actus reus* for a corporate officer accused of these offences was directing, authorizing, permitting, and acquiescing" in the violations. And that's what the officer in this case did. There's nothing in the law that requires the prosecution to prove that the officer had knowledge of the circumstances [[R. v. Mossman](#), 2026 BCCA 75 (CanLII), February 26, 2026].

Action Point: The moral of *Mossman* is that corporate officers and directors are answerable for the environmental violations of their companies. The same is true of OHS laws. The standard is to exercise due diligence. Use the [OHSI Due Diligence Scorecard](#) and accompanying Case Summaries to draw other important lessons that you can use to assess what does and doesn't meet the standards of due diligence.

Material Handling: Venerable Retailer Fined \$521,694 for Repeat Storage Rack Violations

A retailer that's been selling plumbing supplies in British Columbia since opening its first store in Victoria in 1892 was fined \$521,694 for OHS violations. WorkSafeBC inspectors issued the penalty, the highest OHS fine reported in Canada in 2026 so far, after observing damaged and unsafe storage rack violations in use at the company's Penticton store, a high-risk and repeat violation, as was the second violation cited of failing to ensure that storage racks were installed by a qualified person according to the manufacturer's or an engineer's instructions [[Andrew Sheret Limited](#), January 8, 2026].

Action Point: Although BC has the strictest OHS storage rack requirements in Canada, the same thing can happen at any site where materials are racked, stacked, piled, and stored. Use the OHS Insider [storage rack inspection checklist](#) to avoid similar violations at your workplace.