

Federal

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

WHMIS

Feb 11: The government published updated Canadian Occupational Health and Safety ([COHS regulations](#)) incorporating significant new “Hazardous Substances” requirements for mining, aviation, maritime, trains, oil and gas, and other federally-regulated industries. The regulations require employers to adopt new safety measures for engineered nanomaterials, thermal stress, non-solar ultraviolet radiation, and radon. They also lower permissible exposure levels and clarify air sampling and recordkeeping requirements.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [WHMIS Training Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Heat Stress

Feb 11: New [COHS regulations](#) require federally regulated employers to, in consultation with their joint health and safety committee (JHSC) or safety representative, implement measures to protect workers against heat and cold stress. Examples: Climate monitoring, work rest cycles, acclimatization, insulation, fans, PPE, and protective clothing and training workers on the signs and symptoms of thermal stress.

Action Point: If you're federally regulated, you can use the OHS Insider [Heat Stress Safety and Compliance Game Plan](#) to ensure that you'll be ready when the new regulations take effect next February.

Airborne Contaminants

Feb 11: New [regulations](#) require federally regulated employers to implement an engineered nanomaterials prevention and control program. Engineered nanomaterials are tiny versions of hazardous chemical substances that exhibit different chemical and physical properties from their larger counterparts along with unique electromagnetic behaviours. Affected industries include aircraft servicing, pipeline manufacturers, research labs, communications, and road and rail transportation.

Action Point: Find out about the [6 steps to take to protect workers from nanoparticle hazards](#).

Electrical Safety

Feb 11: New [COHS regulations](#) require federally regulated employers to implement the United States National Fire Protection Association standard 77 (NFPA 77), *Recommended Practice on Static Electricity*, in all situations where there's a presence of static electricity.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Electrical Safety Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Radiation

Feb 11: New federal [COHS regulations](#) require employers to keep workers' exposure to non-solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation with wavelengths ranging from 180 nanometres (nm) and 400 nm within specified ACGIH Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) and Biological Exposure Indices (BEIs). Previously, there were no maximum federal workplace exposure levels for non-solar UV radiation, which typically arises from arc welding and medical practice for bacteria killing, ink curing, phototherapy, and other applications.

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

Airborne Contaminants

Feb 11: New [regulations](#) establish the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) hazard exposure level for radon in maritime, trains, oil and gas and other federally regulated workplaces (other than aviation and mining where radon isn't an issue) as 200 Bq/m³, which is in line with current *COHS Regulations* and Health Canada guidelines.

Ergonomics

Feb 28: In recognition of International RSI Awareness Day, CCOHS called on employers across the country to strengthen efforts to prevent workplace repetitive strain injuries. Recommended actions: Reduce repetitive work, improve workstation design, allow frequent rest breaks, and furnish training on RSI early signs and symptoms.

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

Emergency Response

Feb 20: The federal government announced that it will invest \$316.7 million over the next five years to increase Canada's aerial wildfire firefighting capacity. The money will go to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC), which coordinates wildfire resources among federal, provincial, and territorial governments, to lease wildfire fighting aircraft to be deployed where needed during periods of intense wildfire activity.

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

New Laws

Feb 18: The federal government announced the renewed Express Entry immigration categories for 2026: i. French-language proficiency; ii. health care and social services occupations; iii. education occupations; iv. science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations; and v. trade occupations. The minimum work experience required for all renewed categories has been increased from six months to one year of experience in an eligible occupation, gained in Canada or abroad over the previous three years.

Action Point: Expect more of your workforce to speak a language other than English and find out [whether OHS laws require you to provide multilingual safety training](#) to your workers.

New Laws

Feb 19: The federal government is rolling out new measures to protect businesses against extortion. The Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC) will work closely with Canadian banks, credit unions, financial service providers of cryptocurrencies and other virtual assets, other government agencies, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and local police to enhance information sharing. FINTRAC will also issue practical guidance to help financial institutions recognize patterns and behaviours associated with extortion.

Industry Challenges

Feb 18: The Canadian government initiated an ambitious plan to support the nation's auto manufacturing sector, including the allocation of \$3 billion from the [Strategic Response Fund](#) and up to \$100 million from the [Regional Tariff Response Initiative](#) to help the auto industry adapt, grow, and diversify to new markets. The industry will also get help on the tax side via the [Productivity Super-Deduction](#) and reduced corporate tax rates for zero emission- technology manufacturers to encourage investment in clean technologies and Electronic Vehicles (EVs).

Industry Challenges

Feb 25: Forestry sector companies harmed by the Trump tariffs can now apply for \$500 million in additional federal support through: i. The [Investments in Forest Industry Transformation](#) (IFIT) program; ii. The [Green Construction Through Wood](#) (GCWood) program; iii. The [Indigenous Forestry Initiative](#) (IFI); and iv. The [Global Forest Leadership Program](#) (GloFor).

New Laws

Feb 25: [Bill C-12](#) proposing a wide range of new legal measures to strengthen Canadian border security and prevent the flow of illegal drugs, human trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime has been reported out of Committee in the Senate, having passed the House of Commons in October.

New Laws

Jan 27: Newly tabled [Private Member Bill C-259](#) would revise the *Canada Labour Code* to clarify what constitutes dominating or influencing a trade union by an employer, or person acting on an employer's behalf. Under the Bill, a trade union that's so dominated or influenced would lose its certification, while employers who exercised such dominance or influence would be subject to penalties.

Industry Challenges

Feb 25: The federal government's AgriMarketing Program is now accepting applications for funding under two new streams supporting the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector: [Market Diversification for National Industry Associations](#) and the [Market Diversification for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises](#). Revised AgriStability guidelines add pasture-related feed costs as an allowable expense under the program, which will help producers whose animals graze on land they don't own, particularly cow-calf, sheep, and goat farmers, who rely heavily on rented pastureland.

Training

Feb 6: The Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy's Investments in Training Equipment stream is now open for [applications](#). The stream, which offers funding to unions and training providers for training workers in the Red Seals trades, will now cover the costs of shipping and installing training equipment with contributions of up to 70% in remote or infrastructure-limited areas.

Accessibility

Mar 12: The deadline is March 12 for companies to [apply](#) for federal Enabling Accessibility Fund grants of \$500,000 to \$1 million for construction, renovation and retrofit projects aimed at making workplaces safer and more accessible for persons with disabilities. EAF funding is open to non-profits, for-profits, Indigenous organizations and municipal and territorial governments for projects lasting up to 24 months.

Action Point: [Ensure that your own workplace emergency response and evacuation policy](#) accounts for the disabled so that vulnerable people don't get left behind when fires and other emergencies happen.

Workplace Violence

Feb 2: Second Reading for [Bill C-16](#) adding new sexual violence protections to the *Criminal Code*, including the creation of a new offence for engaging in a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct toward an intimate partner and making it a first degree murder to commit what's called "femicide" (when the victim is female), defined as murder against an intimate partner as part of a pattern of coercive or controlling conduct, sexual violence, human trafficking or motivated by hate. The bill would also provide for tougher penalties for manslaughter committed in those circumstances while making it easier for victims to prove they were subject to criminal harassment.

Action Point: Domestic and sexual violence becomes an OHS compliance issue when it happens at the victim's workplace. Bottom Line: Simply having a workplace violence prevention plan isn't enough. You also need to incorporate protections against workplace domestic violence into the prevention plan. Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Domestic Violence Prevention Plan](#) to protect your own workers.

Workplace Violence

Feb 12: In response to the spate of assaults on healthcare workers, the Senate passed and the House of Commons is now debating [Bill S-233](#) amending the *Criminal Code* to require a court to consider the fact that the victim of an assault is a person who provides health services or a first responder to be an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing.

Workplace Violence

Feb 24: The Senate passed [Bill S-242](#) (*Georgina's Law*) requiring the federal government to develop a national action to prevent intimate partner violence and support its victims. The government would have to propose the plan within one year and provide progress reports on its implementation every two years.

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

Environmental

Feb 25: Second Reading for [Bill C-244](#) banning the owner of a vessel from transferring ownership of it to a person, knowing that—or in reckless disregard as to whether—the transferee lacks the ability, resources, or intent to maintain, operate, or dispose of the vessel in a manner that prevents it from becoming wrecked, abandoned, or hazardous.

Environmental

Mar 13: Public comments close on a [proposal](#) to make domestic content one of the criteria for Clean Technology and Clean Electricity investment tax credits (ITCs) eligibility. Designed to help Canada transition to a net-zero economy, ITCs are support new investments in clean or low-emitting energy systems. Other countries, including the U.S., have incorporated domestic content requirements into their own clean electricity tax credits to encourage use of domestic materials and equipment.

CASES

Termination: Remorse, Lack of Prior Discipline Can't Save Job of Egregious Sex Harasser

The union admitted that a pilot serving as senior captain made unwelcome sexual remarks to and inappropriately touched the boob, thigh, and butt of a female flight attendant during an overnight layover. The union also agreed that he should be punished for his actions. The only question was whether he deserved to lose his job. In arguing for reinstatement, the union cited the pilot's 16-year record, lack of prior discipline, genuine remorse, and post-incident recognition that his conduct was unacceptable sexual harassment rather than just a misunderstanding of personal boundaries. But the federal arbitrator found the pilot's conduct "egregious" and his explanation unconvincing. "I do not think one needs to be trained to know that you cannot touch a coworker's breast unless she has consented," [[Sunwing Airlines Inc. \(Westjet\) v Unifor, Local 7378](#), 2026 CanLII 15014 (CA LA), February 26, 2026].

Action Point: To deal effectively with harassment, you need to know when it's actually taking place at your workplace. Don't assume workers will tell you that they're being sexually harassed like the flight attendant in this case did. Use the OHS Insider [Assessment Questionnaire template](#) to uncover hidden harassment, bullying, and stalking problems at your workplace.

Drugs & Alcohol: Mixed Test Results, Bizarre Accident Don't Prove Impairment

A railway signaller exited his vehicle but didn't put it in park; when he got back in, he accidentally hit the accelerator rather than the brake causing a collision resulting in property damage but no injury. While the post-incident breathalyzer and oral fluid swab tests came back negative, the urinalysis tested positive for THC in the amount of 33 ng/ml. So, the railway suspended him for 30 days while requiring him to submit to random drug testing as a condition to returning to work. The union claimed there were no grounds for discipline. Relying on previous cases involving similar circumstances, the federal arbitrator ruled that the testing results didn't prove that

the signaler was impaired. Jumping in and out of the vehicle the way the signaler did was concerning, the arbitrator acknowledged. “Unfortunately, accidents happen [and] do not, by themselves, support a finding of impairment.” So, the arbitrator rescinded the suspension [[IBEW, System Council No. 11 v Toronto Terminals Railway Company](#), 2026 CanLII 10266 (CA LA), February 12, 2026].

Action Point: While creating a legally sound [Drugs and Alcohol Testing Policy](#) is vital to ensuring a sober workplace, the *IBEW* case illustrates that a positive test for marijuana doesn’t necessarily prove that an employee was impaired at the time of testing. In this case, the level of THC was simply too low and was offset by the negative results of the breathalyzer and oral fluid swab tests.