

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Health & Safety

Aug 12: The government called on British Columbians to take steps to reduce their exposure to toxic wildfire smoke permeating much of the province, including creating a clean air space at home, avoiding strenuous exercise, and considering use of a well-fitted N95 mask. Employers should also make arrangements to protect workers who work outdoors or in poorly ventilated facilities.

Action Point: [How to support employees who have to evacuate due to wildfires](#)

Employment Standards

Aug 1: New [regulations](#) took effect to streamline Employment Standard Branch employee complaint and dispute-resolution processes under the *Employment Standards Act* and *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*. In addition to promoting quick resolution of straightforward complaints, the new rules require employers who appeal determinations to deposit amounts owed before the appeal proceeds.

Action Point: Find out about [5 common Temporary Foreign Worker Program liability pitfalls and how to avoid them](#).

New Laws

Aug 10: The federal government announced over \$30.5 million of Regional Tariff Response Initiative (RTRI) funding to enhance the competitiveness of 24 British Columbia businesses in key sectors affected by U.S. tariffs, including advanced manufacturing, forestry, steel, and aluminum. Recipients will use the money to boost productivity, cut costs, build more resilient supply chains, and reach new markets.

Action Point: Find out about the [8 ways the U.S. tariffs affect](#) Canadian workplaces and HR activities.

New Laws

Aug 12: The federal government announced that it's kicking in another \$2.1 million in funding over the next year for the expansion of the Educational Partnership Foundation's (EPF) Trades Careers program, bringing the total investment in the project to nearly \$5.7 million. The EPF supports young Canadians in British Columbia and Alberta seeking to develop skills, gain valuable work experience, and pursue apprenticeship certification in the Red Seal trades through a Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Employment Benefits

Aug 6: Effective immediately, British Columbia pension plan administrators and service providers must use the three updated pension plan application forms now available on the BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) website: the [Application for Registration of a Pension Plan](#), [Application for Registration of an Amendment to a](#)

[Pension Plan](#), and [Application of Amendment to a Supporting Plan Document](#).

Action Point: Find out about the [perils of poor pension plan governance and how to avoid them](#).

New Laws

Jul 30: The federal government announced an investment of more than \$152 million in 54 new infrastructure projects across British Columbia through the Strategic Priorities Fund. The money will go to infrastructure projects that are beyond the financial capacity of a single local government, under the province's Build Communities Strong Fund (BCSF) Community stream.

New Laws

Jul 20: Under newly proposed [regulations](#), new drivers won't have to pass the second road test to progress to a Class 5 licence. Instead, they'll be subject to a driving record assessment showing whether they meet the minimum driving experience as a novice driver. Unsafe behaviours, including convictions for speeding and electronic device use, will result in re-starting the "novice" driving period. Drivers who pass the assessment will be eligible to move to a Class 5 licence with a 12-month restricted period during which they'll be subject to a zero blood-alcohol and drug restriction. Effective date: October 19, 2026.

Young Workers

Jul 23: With many companies hiring seasonal staff during the summer, WorkSafeBC reminded employers that young and new workers remain at higher risk of workplace injury during their first months on the job. In 2025, WorkSafeBC accepted more than 7,000 claims from young workers who were injured on the job in BC. Between 2021 and 2025, 18 young workers lost their lives due to workplace incidents. Research shows that while young workers value safety, many hesitate to speak up about unsafe work.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [Game Plan](#) to comply with special OHS and employment standards rules protecting young employees.

Workplace Harassment

Aug 10: WorkSafeBC launched public consultations on [proposed](#) new OHS (Part 4.1) Regulations requiring employers to implement workplace harassment and violence programs that include written policies and procedures for dealing with harassment and violence, training workers on the risks, recording incidents, and implementing or modifying control measures to eliminate or minimize risk of recurrence. Deadline [to comment](#): October 9.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [Workplace Harassment Prevention Game Plan](#) to ensure compliance with the new BC OHS requirements.

Health & Safety

Jul 21: With temperatures climbing into the mid-30s in some parts of the province, WorkSafeBC reminded employers to take steps to protect workers from heat-related illness. Between 2021 and 2025, WorkSafeBC accepted 335 heat-related injury claims, including 47 in 2025. Outdoor workers in construction, agriculture, transportation,

and public works are at high risk, as are indoor workers in kitchens, warehouses, and manufacturing facilities, especially in spaces without air conditioning.

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

Health & Safety

Jul 22: WorkSafeBC announced that revised [OHS requirements](#) for use of tight-fitting respirators will officially take effect on November 6. The new rules eliminate the term “clean shaven” and replace 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.

CASES

Overtime: Supervisor Is Not a “Manager” and Must Be Paid Overtime

A warehouse night shift supervisor who left the company after being moved to the day shift filed a complaint for constructive dismissal and unpaid overtime. The company claimed the shift change was in response to theft allegations against the supervisor and that overtime wasn’t required because she was a “manager.” Finding no evidence to support the theft charges, the Employment Standards Director found that the shift change was constructive dismissal and that the supervisor wasn’t a manager but an employee entitled to overtime and other *Employment Standards Act* (ESA) payments. The company appealed to the BC Employment Standards Tribunal, which rendered a mixed verdict: The Director’s ruling on constructive dismissal was erroneous because it didn’t address the company’s legitimate concerns about the supervisor’s behaviour; however, the determination of her not being a manager wasn’t clearly erroneous. Result: The company had to pay her about \$23,000 in unpaid ESA entitlements for the time she did work, including \$9,858 in overtime [[Fruiticana Produce Ltd.](#), 2026 BCEST 59 (CanLII), July 28, 2026].

Action Point: Find out more about [overtime exemption for “manager” requirements across Canada](#).

Labour Relations: Mill Must Use Union Employees to Serve as First Aid Attendants

In 2024, OHS regulations took effect increasing the number and certification level of First Aid Attendants (“FAAs”) required at workplaces. Instead of posting union employees in the First Aid/Security classification as it had always done to meet increased first aid coverage requirements, a pulp mill decided to train non-union supervisors to serve as FAAs. The union accused the mill of violating the collective agreement. The mill claimed the assignment was valid, noting that the agreement didn’t specifically address the issue. The BC arbitrator sided with the union. The collective agreement banned use of non-union supervisors for work normally performed by union workers. And serving as an on-site FAA **was** work normally

performed by union members [[Cariboo Pulp & Paper Company v Unifor, Local 1115](#), 2026 CanLII 75558 (BC LA), July 20, 2026].

Action Point: Find out [what you can and can't do when a union tries to organize your employees](#).