

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Workers' Compensation

Jul 13: WorkSafeBC proposed keeping average workers' compensation base rates at \$1.55 per \$100 assessable payroll for the tenth year in a row. In 2027, rates will decrease for 30% of employers, stay the same for 22%, and increase for 48%. WorkSafeBC will also distribute \$960 million in surplus funds to employers through discounted rates and assessment credits.

New Laws

Jul 2: The federal government will provide billions of dollars in funding for major development projects across the province under the new Canada-British Columbia Cooperative Prosperity Agreement Central, including up to \$3 billion for the Fraser River Tunnel Project, along with commitments to the Red Chris mine expansion and North Coast Transmission Line. The Agreement also confirms that the North Coast tanker ban will be fully maintained without modification and that British Columbia will get compensation for environmental risk if the federal government imposes a pipeline on the province.

New Laws

Jul 13: British Columbia Timber Sales expanded its Value-Added Manufacturing Program by creating a new dedicated category that includes custom cutters and processors without their own sawmilling facilities who make value-added manufactured wood products, including specialty products like customer-specific lumber products, Japanese temple components, and windows and doors. The custom cutter and processor sector directly employs an estimated 250 people, while also playing an important role in the economy of the Lower Mainland.

Employment Benefits

Jun 25: The British Columbia Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) issued a new [Guideline](#) outlining expectations and best practices for preparation and documentation of the triennial pension plan assessment. All administrators are required to self-assess, at least triennially, the effectiveness, quality and performance of the administration of their pension plan and provide the written documentation of the assessment to BCFSA upon request.

Training

Jul 6: British Columbia expanded skilled trades certification to tower and mobile crane operators to ensure consistent training and certification standards and improve crane safety. Result: Individuals working as tower or mobile crane operators have one year to register as an apprentice with SkilledTradesBC or take the skilled trades certification exam and become a journeyperson before the new requirements take effect on July 5, 2027.

Training

Jun 29: British Columbia students and workers can now [apply](#) for 2026-2027 Future Skills Grants of up to \$3,500 for career training opportunities in clean energy, construction, health care, mining, and other high-demand sectors. Since launching in 2023, the future skills grant has enabled more than 16,500 learners to receive short-term skills training at public post-secondary institutions across the province.

New Laws

July 1: New *Environmental Management Act* site remediation fees took effect in British Columbia with responsible parties paying a flat fee ranging from \$5,000 to \$30,000 for most site remediation services. Site registry searches will now be free for those seeking information about the environmental condition of land. Fees to download documents will range but will generally be \$150 or less.

New Laws

Jun 9: New drivers in British Columbia can now take the knowledge test required for a Learner's licence online, at a time and location that works for them. The new online testing option will especially help people living in rural and remote communities because it eliminates the need to travel to an ICBC office and pass the test in person to get a full driver's licence.

New Laws

Jun 8: The Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) will receive \$20 million from the province this year to help develop new and innovative forest practices. In addition to strengthening wildfire prevention and local jobs, the money will support 60 forest enhancement projects delivered by First Nations, local governments, community forests, woodlot operators, forestry companies, and other organizations working to improve the long-term health and resilience of British Columbia's forests.

Health & Safety

Jun 16: With temperatures climbing and dry conditions continuing, WorkSafeBC [reminded](#) employers to plan ahead for summer weather hazards, including heat stress and wildfire smoke, especially if they rely on workers to perform outdoor operations.

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

Drugs & Alcohol

Jul 9: According to the BC Coroners Service, 109 people in the province died due to suspected use of toxic drugs in May. The good news is that this is the lowest number of monthly deaths due to suspected unregulated drug toxicity reported by the Coroners Service since 79 deaths were reported in February 2020. During the first five months of 2026, deaths among people between 30 and 59 accounted for 68% of drug-toxicity deaths in the province, with 76% of the victims male. Since 2021, the death rate among people 60 and older has remained relatively stable, while the death rate among those 19 to 59 has declined significantly.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [naloxone opioid drug overdose plan](#) that can help you prevent overdose deaths at your workplace.

CASES

Telecommuting: Refusing to Let Underperforming Temp Work from Home Is Not Discrimination

Claiming that something in the office building was making her sick, a client service advisor hired under a temporary contract asked for permission to work from home. The company said no because the advisor's performance didn't meet the standards required for employees to be allowed to telecommute and because the doctor's note she provided was too vague to support her need to work from home. The advisor sued the company for failure to accommodate her disability, but the human rights commission dismissed the complaint. After a series of lost appeals, she took her claim to the BC Court of Appeal, which refused to second guess the lower court's upholding the company's decision to deny permission to work from home based on its telecommuting policy and lack of clear medical information as reasonable [[McNeil v. British Columbia \(Human Rights Tribunal\)](#), 2026 BCCA 296 (CanLII), July 10, 2026].

Action Point: Employees don't have the right to work from home unless employers allow them to. Permission may be either express or implied. The moral of *McNeil* is that employers may also impose reasonable conditions on telecommuting rights, such as requiring them to meet stated performance criteria. The key is to clearly dictate the rules by implementing a [legally sound telecommuting policy](#) at your workplace.

Drugs & Alcohol: Top Court Okays Opioid Costs Class Action Against Pharma Companies

British Columbia's highest court affirmed the province's right to proceed with its class action lawsuit against opioid manufacturers, distributors, and consultants. Initially filed under the *Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act* in 2018, the lawsuit is being led by BC's government on behalf of all federal, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada seeking to recover healthcare costs related to opioid use disorder. The suit accuses pharmaceutical companies of engaging in deceptive marketing and wrongfully promoted opioids for chronic pain, driving the nationwide addiction crisis [[Noramco LLC v. British Columbia](#), 2026 BCCA 272 (CanLII), June 24, 2026].

Workplace Violence: Uttering a Death Threat Isn't Automatic Grounds for Termination

Should a cleaning worker be fired for saying in Punjabi that she wanted to kill her supervisor? Absolutely, argued the employer, citing its zero tolerance policy for workplace violence and the worker's recent suspension for insubordination. The union contended that the statement wasn't a genuine death threat but an "ill-considered utterance" in "an emotional moment." While acknowledging that expressing a desire to kill one's supervisor is a serious offence, the BC arbitrator concluded that termination was excessive in this case. Mitigating factors included the worker's 26 years of service, lack of discipline for threats or violence, and candor

in admitting she made the threat, which indicated that “her rehabilitative potential is high and that she does not pose a danger to the safety of others” [[Servantage Services Corporation v Unifor Local 3000](#), 2026 CanLII 62024 (BC LA), June 18, 2026].

Action Point: The takeaway is that determination of whether violent conduct constitutes just cause for termination generally depends on the specific facts and circumstances involved. The most important thing to do is implement a legally sound and effective [Workplace Violence Prevention Game Plan](#) at your site.