

Nova Scotia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

Jun 24: Nova Scotia unveiled a new [Seafood Sector Strategy](#) to help the industry adapt over the next three years. Key initiatives: i. Launch the Seafood Sector Innovation Hub for applied research; ii. Improve programs to grow sector innovation, efficiency, and resilience; iii. Grow the aquaculture sector; and iv. Provide support for product diversification, value-added processing, and full product utilization.

New Laws

Jun 10: Effective today, lead acid battery manufacturing facilities need only an industrial approval under the [Environmental Assessment Regulations](#). Previously, these facilities needed both an industrial approval and a Class II environmental assessment. Nova Scotia was the only jurisdiction in Canada that required both approvals for this activity.

New Laws

Jul 15: The Nova Scotia Liquor Corp. (NSLC) says it will allow local wineries, cideries, breweries, and distilleries to cross-sell other local alcohol products at their locations. New rules will also allow local producers to set up secondary retail stores separate from their production facilities. Under current NSLC rules, all such retail stores must be attached to a production facility.

Mental Stress

Jul 10: Nova Scotia and the federal government renewed their memorandum of understanding ensuring residents continued access to the 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline. Launched in 2023, 9-8-8 is a free 24/7 support service that connects callers with trained responders providing immediate, compassionate help in English or French.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective workplace [mental health policy](#) for your employees.

Health & Safety

Jul 9: The Nova Scotia WCB reports that the time-loss injury rate declined to an all-time low in June. In other words, only 1.15 of 100 workers suffered an injury serious enough to result in the loss of three or more workdays during the month. It's a notable number because the agency's long-term strategy calls for achieving a 1.15 rate by 2030, meaning that the plan is three years ahead of schedule.

Action Point: Find out [how to create a vibrant workplace health and safety culture](#) to prevent injuries and workers' compensation claims at your company.

Drugs & Alcohol

Jun 25: Increased fines for cannabis offences took effect in Nova Scotia. Examples:

i. \$250 to \$500 for a person under 19 who possesses cannabis; ii. \$600 to \$5,000 for purchasing cannabis anywhere other than the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation; iii. \$5,000 to \$25,000 for an individual selling cannabis illegally; and iv. \$15,000 to \$50,000 for a business selling cannabis illegally. It's also now a \$25,000 offence for illegal cannabis sellers to advertise or promote cannabis sales and for landlords to allow cannabis sales on their property.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [fitness for duty policy to control substance abuse](#) at your workplace.

Workers' Compensation

Jun 25: The Nova Scotia WCB approved two new Vocational Rehabilitation policies that, among other things, provide workers access to the Vocational Rehabilitation program sooner while focusing on building job skills that lead to employment.

CASES

Leaves of Absence: Enrolling in College while on LTD Leave Is Not Just Cause for Discipline

The Nova Scotia Public Services Commission (PSC) fired a union employee for attending a Bachelor of Journalism degree at King's College while she was on long term disability (LTD). The termination letter cited inconsistency between enrollment in school with being on LTD as the reason for termination. But at the grievance hearing six months later, PSC argued that she was fired for not disclosing that she was enrolled in the course. Either way, the arbitrator found no just cause for discipline. There was no evidence of any misrepresentation or lack of cooperation on the employee's part. Attending school was not only consistent with her assessed capabilities but also part of her rehab plan. And while the collective agreement required employees to disclose educational enrollment while on sick leave, there was no such disclosure language pertaining to LTD [*Nova Scotia Government and General Employees' Union v. Nova Scotia (Public Service Commission)*, 2026 CanLII 69910 (NS LA), July 8, 2026].

Action Point: The case illustrates the importance of maintaining communication with employees on long-term leave. While the employee in this case enrolled in school, the most common scenario involves employees who go AWOL or [disappear while on leave](#).

Workplace Harassment: Placing Manager On Leave Isn't Reprisal for Harassment Complaint

A health centre manager claimed he was put on paid administrative leave in reprisal for complaining about alleged respectful workplace breaches committed by his boss. The OHS investigator found no reprisal, finding that the centre put the manager on leave not as punishment but to protect him pending the investigation into his toxic relationship with the boss. The Nova Scotia Labour Board upheld the

ruling. Even if it was an adverse action, there was no evidence that the manager was put on leave because he complained. Moreover, he complained to the employer before the new Nova Scotia OHS psychological harms protections he claimed he was asserting officially took effect [[Fells v IWK Health](#), 2026 NSLB 29 (CanLII), June 25, 2026].

Action Point: Courts are divided on the issue of whether putting an employee on leave pending the results of a harassment investigation is a disciplinary measure subject to reprisal protections. But one thing that is clear is that speaking out against workplace violence and harassment isn't blanket immunity to violate company rules and policies. Find out [how to discipline employees for legitimate offences without committing reprisals or retaliation](#).