

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Jun 1: British Columbia's general minimum wage increases 40 cents to \$18.25 per hour. Minimum wages for resident caretakers, live-in home-support workers, and live-in camp leaders also rose by that same 2.1%. The app-based ride-hailing and delivery-service minimum wage increased to \$21.89. Increases to minimum piece rates for hand-harvested crops take effect on December 31.

Action Point: Find out [how to avoid common payroll errors](#) when adjusting to minimum wage increases.

Immigration

Apr 20: British Columbia announced that it's opting in on a proposed federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) policy change that temporarily allows rural employers to retain existing low-wage temporary foreign workers beyond the current 10% cap. However, the province isn't opting in to the proposed increase of the low-wage stream cap to 15%, which would allow employers to bring in more new temporary foreign workers. Seasonal, short-term and primary agriculture positions will remain exempt from caps.

Action Point: Find out about the 10 things employers [need to know about hiring temporary foreign workers](#).

Employment Benefits

Apr 24: [Bill 33-2023 Pension Benefits Standards Act](#) changes take effect in BC on October 30. Highlights: i. Defined contribution plans may offer variable life benefits; ii. Auto-enrolment and auto-escalation of member contributions; and iii. Option of surviving spouses of members who die before retirement to choose a pension directly from the plan rather than a locked-in transfer.

Training

May 13: The province's new Look West program will provide \$241 million over three years to train British Columbia workers for in-demand jobs with the government to fund up to 5,000 new trades training seats, increase per-seat funding across apprenticeship programs, and cut waitlists for in-demand trades programs.

Training

Apr 30: British Columbia announced a new \$20.8 million grant to provide upskill training and wage support to as many as 1,400 forestry workers, contractors, and employers affected by tariffs. The province will deliver the money in partnership with the Northern Development Initiative Trust via contracts available through BC Bid. The grant can also be stacked to include funding for worker training, wage, or workforce supports alongside logging and contractor work.

New Laws

Apr 16: Newly passed [Bill 15](#) makes the environmental assessment process that new projects must navigate more predictable by establishing clear rules governing how issues raised by First Nations are identified and resolved during the process. The Bill also provides for third-party dispute resolution if the Province and a First Nation can't reach consensus at milestones during the environmental assessment process.

Industry Challenges

Apr 21: Third Reading for [Bill 14](#) authorizing BC Timber Sales (BCTS) to issue timber sales licences for a wider range for a wider range of fibre-generating and forest stewardship activities, including commercial thinning, wildfire risk reduction, and salvage of damaged trees. The government claims that the new licensing regime will create jobs and increase the province's fibre supply by as much as 17,700 truck loads, or 800,000 cubic metres.

New Laws

Apr 14: [Bill 15](#), which has passed Second Reading, would make the environmental assessment process that new projects must navigate more predictable by establishing clear rules governing how issues raised by First Nations are identified and resolved during the process. The Bill also provides for third-party dispute resolution if the Province and a First Nation can't reach consensus at milestones during the environmental assessment process.

New Laws

Apr 30: The BC Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF) program announced that it's investing over \$18 million in 10 projects to help local governments and First Nations across the province reduce risk of flood, drought, extreme temperatures, earthquakes, and landslides. The largest outlays will go to the Shishalh Nation (\$5 million), the Cities of Terrace (\$4.075 million), and Vancouver (\$3.1 million).

New Laws

Apr 16: Getting a driver's licence in British Columbia will be much easier now that [Bill 6](#) amending the *Motor Vehicle Act* to establish a system enabling residents to apply for, renew, or replace their licence online has received Royal Assent. Regulations will be necessary to fill in the crucial operational details.

New Laws

May 16: [Private Member Bill M217](#), which is now through Committee, would require the installation of dashboard cameras in commercial vehicles with a gross weight of over 8,200 kgs. Required cameras must retain at least 72 hours of footage, have at least 1,080 progressive scan high-definition resolution and night vision capability, and record at the manufacturer's default settings on the device's local storage. Footage would also be subject to privacy protections.

Action Point: Keep [remote monitoring of employees within privacy boundaries](#).

Health & Safety

Apr 27: There were 138 work fatalities in British Columbia in 2025, including 79

occupational disease deaths of which 36 were due to asbestos exposure. Forty-one workers were killed by traumatic workplace injuries resulting from incidents such as falls from heights, being struck by objects, and being caught in equipment or machinery. Another 18 workers died in motor vehicle incidents.

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

Health & Safety

Apr 16: Private Member [Bill M 214](#) requiring the government to develop a plan to provide comprehensive health screening of firefighters and to review the plan every five years received Royal Assent.

Workplace Violence

Apr 16: British Columbia passed legislation to expand safe-access zones at schools and create them at places of worship in which people are banned from engaging in activity designed to interfere or prevent access to those locations. "Children should be able to get to school, and people should be able to visit their place of worship, without facing intimidation," noted the BC Attorney General.

Workplace Violence

Apr 16: Royal Assent for [Bill 13](#) expanding safe-access zones at schools and creating them at places of worship in which people are banned from engaging in activity designed to interfere or prevent access to those locations. "Children should be able to get to school, and people should be able to visit their place of worship, without facing intimidation," noted the BC Attorney General in introducing the bills.

Action Point: Are you doing enough to protect your employees against violence at work? Find out about the 10 things you must do to [prevent workplace violence](#).

Workplace Violence

Apr 27: A new coroner's panel [report](#) recommends actions British Columbia can take to reduce intimate-partner violence deaths, including enhanced training for law enforcement, first responders, emergency department staff, and front-line service providers. The panel reviewed information about the 135 intimate-partner deaths in the province between Jan. 1, 2016, and Dec. 31, 2024.

Action Point: Domestic and sexual violence becomes an OHS issue and liability risk for employers when it happens at the victim's workplace. Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence.

Workplace Violence

Apr 2: Third Reading for legislation that would expand safe-access zones at schools and create them at places of worship in which people would be banned from engaging in activity designed to interfere or prevent access to those locations. "Children should be able to get to school, and people should be able to visit their place of worship, without facing intimidation," noted the BC Attorney General in introducing the bills.

Drugs & Alcohol

May 13: The BC Coroners Service reported that there were 135 suspected toxic drug

deaths in the province in March, roughly 4.4 per day. So far in 2026, 82% of unregulated drug deaths occurred inside in places like private residences, social and supportive housing, SROs, shelters and other locations, and 17% occurred outside in places like vehicles, sidewalks, streets, and parks.

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

Workers' Compensation

May 22: British Columbia employers will now have to provide two-factor authentication to sign into their WorkSafeBC online services account. In addition to your password, the new security protocol will ask you to confirm your identity with a one-time code that will be sent to your phone or email. Each user must have their own account and shared logins will no longer work.

CASES

Telecommuting: Making Marketing VP Return to Office Is Constructive Dismissal

A Marketing VP sued a construction firm for constructive dismissal by insisting that she return to the office after letting her work from home for more than three years. The arrangement began when the VP finished maternity leave and continued through the COVID pandemic. While not expressed in the written contract, the VP claimed there was an implied agreement between herself and the Executive VP. The BC court agreed and awarded her 19 months' notice, noting that the Executive VP had told her that she didn't have to return to the office because he knew she was getting the work done and didn't care where she did it. The BC Court of Appeal found the ruling legally sound and rejected the employer's appeal [[Cressey Construction Corporation v. Parolin](#), 2026 BCCA 199 (CanLII), May 11, 2026].

Action Point: Wrongful and constructive dismissal litigation by employees required to return to the office after working from home are becoming increasingly common. Find out [how to end telecommuting arrangements](#) without committing constructive dismissal.

Discrimination: Misconduct Firing of CFO Is Discriminatory When Race Factors into Decision

British Columbia's top court upheld a Human Rights Tribunal decision that race factored into the City of Nanaimo's decision to suspend and then terminate Victor Mema as its Chief Financial Officer in 2018. The ruling came after a 19-day Tribunal trial in which 13 witnesses testified culminating in a \$600,000 damage award for wage loss and injury to dignity. While the City's contentions that the CFO engaged in misconduct might have been true, the fact that race entered into the equation was enough to make the ultimate decision to suspend and terminate racially discriminatory [[Nanaimo \(City\) v. Mema](#), 2026 BCCA 203 (CanLII), May 13, 2026].

Action Point: Beware of certain kinds of seemingly legitimate [employment practices](#) that may have the effect of inadvertently perpetuating racial discrimination and increasing your liability risks.

Health & Safety: Excavation Contractor Fined \$460,000 for C-45 Criminal Negligence

A BC trial court convicted an excavation contractor of two counts of C-45 criminal negligence resulting in the death of one worker and serious injury to another after a retaining wall collapsed and fell into a trench. Prosecutors asked for a \$1 million global penalty; the contractor argued for a \$345,000 fine. The sentencing judge decided that \$400,000 plus a \$60,000 victim's surcharge would be high enough to penalize the company for its inadequate training and "insufficient appreciation of foreseeable risks in trench work." But since then it had implemented "proactive" OHS programs and was "a very different company today than it was at the time of the incident." Having already lost customers and good will due to the incident, loading on a more massive fine the way the prosecution wanted would serve only to threaten the survival of its business [[R. v J. Cote and Son Excavating Ltd.](#), 2026 BCSC 626 (CanLII), April 15, 2026].

Action Point: The C-45 criminal negligence standard (Section 217.1 of the *Criminal Code*) requires the prosecutor to prove that a person with control over how work is failed to take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm to persons carrying out the work and that such failure was due to "wanton or reckless disregard for safety." Find out what you can do to [manage criminal liability risks under C-45](#).