

JANUARY 2024 MONTH IN REVIEW

Nova Scotia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mental Stress

Feb 15: That's the deadline to comment on the Nova Scotia WCB's [proposed changes](#) to its current work-related mental stress coverage rules of psychological injuries. In November, the Assembly passed legislation ([Bill 332](#)) making gradual onset of traumatic mental stress a compensable injury under workers comp.

Action Point: Find out about [workers comp coverage of mental stress claims](#) in Canada

New Laws

Dec 15: Effective today, Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health and government long-term care facilities may not hire travel nurses for longer than 180 days. Upon reaching the 180-day limit, travel nurses must wait a year before being employed by any of those agencies again. The new policy aims to cut turnover and bolster stability in the healthcare sector.

New Laws

Dec 20: Nova Scotia announced that it's boosting the wages of early childhood educators and employees working in licensed child-care centres ranging from \$3.14 to \$4.24 per hour, effective April 15. Those employees will also receive a new package of group benefits and pensions for the first time.

Workplace Violence

Dec 14: The newly signed bilateral agreement between Nova Scotia and the federal government will provide the province \$18.4 million over 4 years to fund projects and initiatives to implement the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

Action Point: Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence

Health & Safety

Nov 29: The WCB announced that Nova Scotia's workplace injury rate dipped to 1.36 per 100 workers in the second quarter, an all-time low and improvement over the 1.41 rate posted in the first quarter. Average time loss days dropped from 292 to 263 per 100 workers, while the WCB's funded percentage improved to 94.5%.

CASES

Drugs & Alcohol: Alcohol Addiction Doesn't Excuse Apprentice's Violent Behaviour

An apprentice boilermaker coming to the end of his 2-year program paid a heavy price for getting drunk and behaving obnoxiously at a union team building bowling event culminating with what he later described as a "bitch slap" of the Assistant Business Manager. For these transgressions, the boilermaker was expelled from the apprenticeship training program and kicked out of the union. The apprentice claimed he had an alcohol addiction and sued the union for disability discrimination. But the Nova Scotia Labour Board didn't buy it. Even if the union had been aware of his alcohol problem at the time, there's nothing it could have done to accommodate the boilermaker's violent behaviour at the team building event. Thus, while harsh, the union's decision to expel wasn't discriminatory [*S.C. v International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Local 73*, 2023 NSLB 146 (CanLII), October 27, 2023].

Action Point: Find out how to [effectively control substance abuse](#) at your workplace