

JULY 2024 MONTH IN REVIEW

British Columbia**LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS****Immigration**

Jul 1: A new law called the *International Credentials Recognition Act* took effect to make it easier for qualified professionals who were trained outside the province to get credentialed in B.C. The Act covers 29 professions, including engineers, social workers, veterinarians, paramedics, early childhood educators, teachers, biologists, land surveyors and architects.

Action Point: Find out the 10 things you need to know if you hire [temporary foreign workers](#)

Workplace Harassment

Jul 26: [Comments](#) ended on [proposed changes](#) to *OHS Regulation* provisions dealing with issues of workplace conduct, violence, and bullying. If finalized, the new rules will require BC employers to implement a harassment and violence prevention program, that provides for risk assessment, risk minimization measures, written policies, procedures and training for supervisors and workers.

Action Point: Use the resources on the [Harassment Compliance Centre](#) to prevent harassment and bullying at your workplace

COVID-19

Jul 26: B.C. officially ended the COVID-19 public health emergency. However, new rules make it mandatory for healthcare workers in public health facilities disclose their immunization status for COVID, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, whooping cough and chicken pox.

Action Point: Use the HRI template to create a workplace infectious illness [exposure control plan](#)

New Laws

Jul 24: [Applications](#) began for StrongerBC future skills grants of up to \$3,500 in funding for tuition in short-term skills training programs provided at public post-secondary institutions during the fall semester, which starts on September 1.

New Laws

Jul 16: A new one-year Memorandum of Understanding allows B.C. winemakers to sell directly to customers in Alberta and vice versa, subject to each province's respective sales taxes.

Employment Benefits

Jul 8: From now through Sept. 6, the BCFSa will be holding [public consultations](#) on [proposed revisions](#) to the Information Security Guideline governing pension plan administrators in the province. The Guideline sets standards for managing information security risks, including unauthorized, illegal or accidental use, disclosure, access to, modifications or destruction of data, or impairment of network systems which can cause serious harm to pension plan members.

Workers Comp

Jul 15: Barring something unexpected, WorkSafeBC will hold 2025 average premium rates at \$1.55 per \$100 of assessable payroll for the eighth year in a row. The agency projects that rates will decrease for 59% of employers, increase for 33% and stay the same for the remaining 8%. In establishing the rates, WorkSafeBC excluded COVID-19 claims costs in the calculation of the expected new injury costs for 2025 and experience rating for employers while including direct COVID-19 claims costs in the rate group balances, which are generally amortized over 5 years, as adjustments to the rate groups' future premium rates.

CASES

Labour Relations: Company Found Guilty of Bribing Employees to Break with Union

The union accused a wood products company of offering cash payments and a raise to 4 employees in exchange for “breaking the union” while advising them that they wouldn’t get a raise if they declined the offer. Since the company didn’t deny the charges, the BC Labour Relations Board declared it guilty of committing unfair labour practices, including using promises or wage increases to “induce an employee to refrain from becoming or continuing to be a member or officer or representative of a trade union” [[Quadra Wood Products Ltd.](#), 2024 BCLRB 85 (CanLII), June 18, 2024].

Drugs & Alcohol: Truck Incident Is Grounds for Testing the Driver but not the Passenger

A mine worker drove a company pickup truck containing a co-worker passenger in the rear into a prohibited zone where blasting operations were carried out. The company required both workers to undergo post-incident drug and alcohol testing. Both tested non-negative. The union cried foul. The BC arbitrator split the baby, ruling that the company had grounds to test the driver but not the passenger. The driver’s 35 years of service didn’t excuse his failure to pay proper attention to where he was driving; while the passenger also had some degree of responsibility, he was basically just along for the ride [[Teck Highland Valley Copper Partnership v United Steelworkers, Local 7619](#), 2024 CanLII 63093 (BC LA), June 14, 2024].

Action Point: Find out [how to create a legally sound drug testing policy](#) at your workplace