

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Health & Safety

Nov 1: [New OHS first aid regulations](#) take effect in BC. Key changes: i. First aid kits must include PPE and meet CSA standards; ii. Levels 1 to 3 training become Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced; iii. Mandatory workplace first aid assessments and annual drills; and iv. New performance-based standards for emergency transportation.

Action Point: Find out [how to create a vibrant safety culture](#) at your company.

Health & Safety

Oct 1: New OHS rules took effect requiring employers responsible for tower crane erection, climbing, repositioning, and dismantling at a workplace to submit a Notice of Project (NOP) to WorkSafeBC at least 2 weeks before the work begins.

Drugs & Alcohol

Oct 24: Use of unregulated toxic drugs claimed the lives of 1,749 British Columbians in the first 9 months of 2024, including 187 in August and 183 in September. Those grim numbers are down 8%, as compared to the same period in 2023 during which there were 1,896 drug-related deaths in the province.

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

Workers' Comp

Oct 21: WorkSafeBC announced that for the seventh year in a row average workers' comp premiums for 2025 will be \$1.55 per \$100 of assessable payroll. Industry base rates will decrease for 59% of employers, increase for 33%, and remain unchanged for 8%.

CASES

Drugs & Alcohol: Worker's 'Grave' Breach of Safety Protocol Justifies Post-Incident Testing

A lumber company required a Heavy Duty Mechanic to undergo post-incident drug and alcohol testing after a slip-up during a troubleshooting operation resulted in damage to the Lexan safety-glass windshield of a log processor. The union claimed that the incident wasn't serious enough to warrant testing and that it occurred only

because the mechanic made the sudden decision to stop the boom, which was the safe thing to do given his concerns that a coworker might have been in the boom's path. It was a normal and natural reaction like slamming on the brakes when driving a car in reverse because somebody might be in the way. But the argument fell on deaf ears, with the BC arbitrator concluding that it was reasonable for the company to fault the mechanic for not locating the coworker immediately before moving the boom. And since this was "a grave lapse in safety protocol," it was also reasonable for the company to suspect that impairment was a contributing factor that justified post-incident testing [*Western Forest Products Inc. v United Steelworkers, Local 1-1937*, 2024 CanLII 83185 (BC LA), August 6, 2024].

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