

Nova Scotia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

Jan 1: Effective this year, Nova Scotia will increase income assistance payments each year based on a cost-of-living index, starting with a 3.1% annual increase in 2025. The new increase follows the 2.5% increase to income assistance rates that took effect in July 2024.

Employment Benefits

Jan 1: [Pension Benefits Regulations](#) changes take effect April 1: One-time right of individuals who transfer funds to a LIF at age 55 or older to unlock up to 50% of locked-in pension funds; Easier unlocking of pension funds for shortened life expectancy or non-residence in Canada; and mandatory pension plan statements for members every 2 years.

Labour Relations

Jan 27: Nova Scotia inked a new 4-year collective agreement (which runs retroactively from 2023) with the union representing Crown attorneys that provides for economic increases of 3.5% on April 1, 2023, 0.5% on March 31, 2024, 3% on April 1, 2024, 2% on April 1, 2025, and 2% on April 1, 2026.

New Laws

Jan 10: Nova Scotia changed its real estate tax laws to support residents who lost their homes in the 2023 wildfires in Halifax and Shelburne County. Under the new rules, individuals in those regions that rebuild their homes to substantially the same condition they were in before the wildfires will not see their capped assessed property increase.

New Laws

Jan 14: The Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB) is providing \$224.2 million in loans to help Port Hawkesbury Paper Wind Ltd. build a large-scale wind energy project. The Goose Harbour Lake Wind Farm will involve the construction and installation of 24 cold climate turbines at a 118 metre hub height with anti-icing system blade technology, yielding a zero-emission, sustainable electricity generation capacity of 168 megawatts.

Accessibility

Feb 14: That's the deadline for Nova Scotia nonprofits, municipalities, villages, schools, post-secondary institutions and Mi'kmaw Band Councils to apply for different accessibility grants for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, including from the [Business ACCESS-](#)

[Ability Program](#), [Community ACCESS-Ability Program](#), [Community Facility Improvement Program](#), [Connect2 Program](#), [Legion Capital Assistance Program](#), and [Recreation Facility Development / Rink Revitalization Fund](#).

Action Point: Find out more about [accessibility laws across Canada](#).

Workers' Comp

Feb 1: Reminder: Nova Scotia employers have until March 31 to submit their workers' comp payroll reports to the WCB listing their actual numbers from 2024 and projected numbers for 2025 to avoid potential late fees, interest and penalties.

CASES

Mental Stress: Nurse Gets WCB Benefits for PTSD Even Though Her Licence Was Suspended

A former licensed practical nurse filed a workers' comp claim for post-traumatic stress disorder after a resident under her care left a locked ward undetected and wandered outside on a February night, dying of cold exposure. The WCB found the injury work-related but denied the LPN earnings-replacement benefits because it was her leaving her employment after her licence was suspended rather than the incident that led to her earnings loss. The Nova Scotia WCAT reversed, ruling that the incident and resulting PTSD were the true cause of her earnings loss in the light of evidence showing that she suffered nightmares, numbness and inability to shower or get out of bed after the incident and before the discipline came down. As a result, she was in no position to contest the discipline even though she might have been able to raise a valid defence [[2024-83-AD \(Re\)](#), 2024 CanLII 127487 (NS WCAT), December 23, 2024].

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