

# British Columbia

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Minimum Wage

Apr 15: BC will raise its general minimum wage from \$17.40 to \$17.85 per hour on June 1, 2025. The same 2.6% increase, which is indexed to the inflation rate, will apply to the minimum wage rates for residential caretakers, live-in home-support workers, camp leaders, and app-based ride-hailing and delivery services workers.

**Action Point:** Find out about the latest round of [minimum wage increases](#) taking effect across Canada this Spring.

### Leaves of Absence

Apr 15: Newly tabled [Bill 11](#) would add language to the BC *Employment Standards* Act banning employers from asking or requiring employees to provide a doctor's note or similar document for health-related short-term absences, with the details to be provided by regulations. Under current rules, employers may request "reasonably sufficient proof" that an employee is sick.

**Action Point:** Find out about the [rules determining whether you can ask sick employees for a doctor's note](#) and what you can do to verify health-related absences.

### Immigration

Apr 14: BC updated the Provincial Nominee Program in response to Ottawa's decision to cut the province's 2025 allocation in half. To make the most of its 4,000 nominations, the province will process the majority of its application inventory and accept approximately 1,100 new applications, mainly for doctors, nurses, and other healthcare services positions.

### Immigration

Mar 27: WorkSafeBC launched a new campaign to make immigrants and other newcomers to the province aware of their safety rights under OHS laws and ensure they understand that those rights vest immediately starting on their very first day of work, regardless of their immigration or workers' comp status.

### New Laws

Apr 10: The Premier ordered BC ministries, health authorities and Crown corporations to review all contracts with U.S. companies and cancel them "wherever possible." The directive also orders agencies to exclude U.S. suppliers under the BC government's goods and services catalogue, cancel subscriptions to U.S. publications and non-essential software and avoid non-essential travel to the U.S.

## New Laws

Apr 3: Second Reading for legislation ([Bill 7](#)) that gives the BC cabinet new tools to fight back against U.S. tariffs, including authority to: i. remove or revise barriers impeding interprovincial trade; ii. impose tolls/fees on non-Canadian commercial vehicles using provincial public infrastructure such as highways; and iii. direct public-sector bodies to exclude U.S. suppliers when procuring goods and services.

**Action Point:** Find out about the [8 ways the U.S. tariffs will affect](#) Canadian workplaces and HR activities.

## Health & Safety

Apr 8: BC began offering free additional COVID-19 vaccines doses to residents at higher risk, including adults ages 65 and older, Indigenous adults age 55 and older, adult residents of long-term care homes and assisted-living facilities, and individuals diagnosed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

**Action Point:** Find out how to create a legally and clinically sound workplace [exposure control plan](#) to protect your employees against the risk of COVID or any other infectious illnesses that may hit your workforce.

## Workers' Comp

Apr 7: Under workers' comp laws, benefits paid out periodically are paid until either the worker's disability ends or earlier if WorkSafeBC believes that the worker "would retire." WorkSafeBC launched public consultations on [proposed policy changes](#) affecting how the agency determines whether a worker "would retire." Deadline to [comment](#): June 6.

## CASES

### Telecommuting: Requiring VP to Return to Office Is Constructive Dismissal

A newly promoted Marketing VP working from home left the constructive firm after it failed to give her raise and demanded that she return to the office. The VP claimed she was constructively dismissed; the firm claimed she quit. While acknowledging that there was no written contract, the VP claimed there was an implied agreement allowing her to telecommute. The BC court agreed, noting that the Executive VP had told her that she didn't have to return to the office after the COVID pandemic because he knew she was getting the work done and he didn't care where she did it. He also approved of her setting up an office at home and buying her own equipment. "There is therefore little doubt that it was an ongoing term of employment that [the Marketing VP] could work from home, which [the Marketing VP] relied-upon and the company accepted," the court reasoned. Result: The firm had to pay her 19 months' notice for wrongful dismissal [[Parolin v Cressey Construction Corporation](#), 2025 BCSC 741 (CanLII), April 23, 2025].

**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.

### Telecommuting: Making Mom Without Childcare Return to Work May Be Family Discrimination

A health clinic gave an administrative assistant permission to work from home during the COVID pandemic. Three months later, it asked her to return to the office. I can't, the assistant responded, because my young kids haven't yet returned to school and I don't have childcare coverage. The clinic fired her 4 days later. So, the assistant sued for family status discrimination. The clinic denied the charge and asked the BC Human Rights Commission to dismiss the complaint, contending that her performance was poor to begin with and that she was even less effective working from home. The Commission refused. The assistant would, in fact, have a valid legal claim for family status discrimination if she could prove her allegations. At the same time, the clinic would have a valid legal defence if it could prove that working from the office was a critical job requirement and that it made reasonable efforts to accommodate the assistant's childcare needs. Either way, the case would have to go to trial to determine what actually happened [[Cooney v. Healthy Essentials Clinic, 2025 BCHRT 60 \(CanLII\)](#), March 5, 2005].

**Action Point:** Find out how far employers must go to [accommodate the scheduling needs of working parents](#).

### **Drugs & Alcohol: Twisted Ankle Not Significant Enough to Justify Post-Incident Testing**

A painter at a liquefied natural gas plant construction site tripped and rolled his ankle. Although embarrassed by his own awkwardness, the painter reported the injury to a supervisor as required by the site's workplace injury reporting policy. But as the saying goes, no good deed goes unpunished. The painter's explanation of what happened didn't sit right with the supervisors who suspected that he might have been drunk or high. So, after investigating the incident, they demanded that the painter submit to post-incident drug and alcohol testing. The tests came back negative but the union filed a grievance claiming that the company didn't have just cause to test. The BC arbitrator agreed. The incident wasn't significant to justify invading the painter's privacy and bodily integrity. Trips and twisted ankles happen at worksites all the time, it reasoned. And even if the incident had been significant, the investigation was "inadequate" because the investigators didn't interview witnesses or get the painter's side of the story. Result: The company had to pay the painter \$2,000 in damages [[Altrad Services Ltd. v International Union of Painters And Allied Trades, Local 138](#), 2025 CanLII 31346 (BC LA), April 10, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out [how to create a legally sound drug testing policy](#) at your workplace and get a template policy you can adapt for your own situation.