

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Jun 1: BC raised its general minimum wage from \$17.40 to \$17.85 per hour. The minimum wage rates for residential caretakers, live-in home-support workers, camp leaders, and app-based ride-hailing and delivery services workers also increased by the same 2.6%.

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

Leaves of Absence

May 11: [Bill 11](#) adding new language to the BC *Employment Standards Act* to ban employers from asking or requiring employees to provide a doctor's note or similar document for health-related short-term absences passed Third Reading. 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.

Employment Benefits

Apr 30: The BCFSA published an Advisory about its newly modernized Supervisory Framework for Pension Plans Registered in British Columbia, which will replace the framework introduced in May 2014. The new framework takes a more forward-looking supervision approach, focusing on continuous monitoring of and mitigating current and emerging risks before they can cause significant problems.

New Laws

Jun 2: From now through July 2, nonprofits can [apply](#) to United Way BC for Work Experience Opportunities Grants to create time-limited paid work opportunities for people on income and disability assistance and Indigenous people receiving equivalent federal assistance. The new joint BC-federal program will provide \$7.7 million in funding over 2 years.

New Laws

Apr 16: Newly tabled [Bill 12](#) proposes changes to make the Graduated Licensing Program simpler and more accessible to Indigenous, rural and remote communities by, among other things, removing the requirement for a second road test to obtain a Class 5 licence. Drivers eligible to move to a Class 5 licence will instead be subject to a new 12-month restriction period, during which they must demonstrate safe driving behaviours to progress.

New Laws

May 13: [Bill 15](#) establishing a new system to make it faster, cheaper and easier for construction companies to get permits for schools, hospitals and other high-priority

infrastructure improvement projects in BC passed Second Reading. The system will be run by a newly created Ministry of Infrastructure.

New Laws

May 7: Legislation ([Bill 7](#)) is working its way through the Assembly that would enable BC to fight back against U.S. tariffs by : i. removing or revising barriers impeding interprovincial trade; ii. imposing tolls/fees on non-Canadian commercial vehicles using provincial public infrastructure such as highways; and iii. directing 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.

Drugs & Alcohol

May 14: The BC Coroners Service announced that illegal toxic drugs accounted for 132 deaths in February and 143 more in March. In the first 3 months of 2025, deaths among those between the ages of 30 and 59 accounted for 67% of drug-toxicity deaths in the province, and 76% were male. The cities with the most unregulated drug deaths so far in 2025 are Vancouver (97), Surrey (52) and Greater Victoria (28).

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [naloxone opioid drug overdose plan](#) that can help you prevent overdose deaths at your workplace.

Workers' Comp

Apr 25: WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approved [changes](#) to agency policy governing whether activity-related soft tissue disorders (ASTDs) of the limbs are considered work-related for purposes of workers' comp coverage. The new ASTDs rules will apply to claims and appeals made on or after July 14, 2025.

CASES

Discrimination: No Evidence Linking Indigenous Identity to Denial of Promotion

"If anyone has a problem with the color of my skin come out and say it, don't treat me differently in a bad way." That's how a millwright of Indigenous origin responded after his supervisor chewed him out for returning from what was supposed to be a 15 minute break after more than 45 minutes. He was sent home for screaming and cursing at another supervisor checking on his work about a year later. And when he got passed over for a promotion 3 months after that, he quit and sued the company for discrimination and a toxic work environment. The BC Human Rights Tribunal ruled that the millwright had no reasonable prospect of winning the case and dismissed the claim without a trial. The company had legitimate, nondiscriminatory reasons for its actions and there was no evidence that the millwright's Indigenous identity or race factored into its decisions [[Nelson v. Pinnacle Renewable Energy and another](#), 2025 BCHRT 94 (CanLII), April 25, 2025].

Action Point: Beware of certain kinds of seemingly legitimate [employment practices](#) that may have the effect of inadvertently perpetuating racial and Indigenous origin discrimination and increasing your liability risks.