

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leaves of Absence

May 29: [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 received Royal Assent but won't take effect until the government issues an implementing regulation. 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 [how to verify sick days and other short medical absences without a doctor's note](#), including via use of [self-certification](#).

Labour Relations

Jun 23: BC published the [findings and recommendations](#) of the Labour Relations Code Review Panel. Deadline to comment: September 19. One key takeaway is what the Panel did not recommend, namely, adding ride-hail, food delivery, and other gig workers to the definition of "employees" with unionization rights. The current Code definition is broad enough to include those workers, the Panel concludes.

Pay Equity

May 30: BC's newly published second annual [Pay Transparency Report](#) finds that there've been "modest improvements" to the province's gender pay gap since 2023 with 3 sectors leading the way: i. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (gap shrinks from 45% to 36%); ii. Mining, quarrying, and oil-and-gas extraction (gap shrank from 24% to 17%); and iii. Wholesale trade (gap shrank from 18% to 11%). The gender pay gap also shrank for young women with post-secondary trade certificates and diplomas from 21% in 2017 to 8% in 2024.

Pay Equity

Nov 1: That's the deadline for all employers with 300 or more employees in BC to prepare and post their [reports](#) about their gender pay gaps. Employers with 50 or more employees in BC must post their first pay equity reports by November 1, 2026.

Action Point: Find out more about [pay equity laws](#) and their practical impact on operations.

Immigration

Jul 1: The [ban](#) on Canadian work experience requirements for regulatory jobs takes effect. Regulatory authorities in BC must replace Canadian work experience requirements with alternative assessment frameworks or apply for an exemption. The province also says it's making progress in eliminating barriers for foreign trained qualified professionals in 29 fields to practice in BC in accordance with *The International Credentials Recognition Act* that took effect on July 1, 2024.

Action Point: Find out about [citizenship discrimination risks and how to avoid them](#).

New Laws

Jun 2: BC launched an aggressive new campaign to recruit U.S. physicians, nurses, and medical professionals in the states of Washington, Oregon, and California. The College of Physicians and Surgeons is also working on bylaw changes to allow U.S. doctors to apply directly to become fully licensed in BC without the need for further licensing exams.

New Laws

May 29: [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 received Royal Assent. The system will be run by a newly created Ministry of Infrastructure.

New Laws

Jun 5: What, if anything, should BC do to cut regulatory red tape and make it easier for provincial businesses to operate? Answering that question is the objective of a new [online survey](#) that will run from now through the early fall.

New Laws

May 29: Royal Assent for [Bill 7](#) authorizing 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.

New Laws

May 22: BC created a new Provincial Forest Advisory Council to make recommendations on how to balance environmental and economic policies in the crucial forestry sector. The Council is expected to submit its final report by the end of 2025.

Young Workers

May 30: WorkSafeBC reminded employers of their OHS duty to provide proper training, orientation and supervision to young and new workers. Roughly 800 young workers suffer job injuries in BC each year. Service-sector jobs accounted for most workers' comp claims in 2024, followed by construction and retail. There have also been 34 young worker fatalities over the past 5 years.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [Game Plan](#) to comply with special OHS and employment standards rules protecting young employees.

Health & Safety

May 26: WorkSafeBC launched an improved version of the online Form 6 that workers are required to use to report a physical injury. The revised Form 6 includes a mobile-friendly design, user-friendly navigation and visuals, easy-to-understand questions, and the capacity to save responses automatically.

Health & Safety

May 12: The BC Assembly tabled Private Member [Bill M 214](#) requiring the government to develop a plan to provide comprehensive health screening of firefighters and to review the plan every 5 years.

Drugs & Alcohol

Jun 24: After 6 straight months of being under the 160-threshold, the death count from illegal toxic drugs in the province jumped to 165 in April, according to preliminary reports from the BC Coroners Service. Two health authorities have accounted for 57% of all drug deaths reported in 2025: Fraser (185 deaths) and Vancouver Coastal (155 deaths).

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

Drugs & Alcohol

Jun 5: BC introduced new minimum standards to improve the safety, quality, and consistency of overdose prevention services. There have been more than 5.6 million visits to overdose prevention services or supervised consumption sites in the province since 2017, resulting in the estimate prevention of over 12,400 overdose deaths.

CASES

Employment Contract: Trucking Firm Is Dependent Contractor Entitled to Termination Notice

Country Lumber (CL) terminated Borly Holdings Ltd, its trucking delivery services firm, without cause after 14 years of service. Borly claimed it was entitled to reasonable termination notice as a dependent contractor. CL argued that Borly was an independent contractor not entitled to notice. After hearing all of the evidence about the work relationship, the BC court ruled that Borly was a dependent contractor citing Borly's economic reliance on CL and CL's control over and integration of Borly's trucking operations into its own business. The long duration of the relationship also suggested that Borly was dependent on CL. Result: The court awarded Borly reasonable notice of 10 months [[Ursic v Country Lumber Ltd.](#), 2025 BCSC 970 (CanLII), May 27, 2025].

Action Point: Find out about current [employment law protections for dependent contractors and gig workers](#).

Termination: Deliberate Safety Violation Is Just Cause to Terminate Longstanding Employee

An experienced oiler who should've known better hopped over a moving conveyor to clear a blockage in a drainage pipe. He knew this was a violation of the company's lockout policy requiring that the conveyor be de-energized but he was frustrated and figured the shortcut was low risk. What he didn't expect was that he'd be spotted in the act by a maintenance staffer who happened to be walking by at that instant and who, despite the oiler's protests, reported the incident to management. Upon being called to the carpet, the oiler made things even worse by suggesting

that some of the safety procedures “are a joke” and admitting to having cut corners before. His reward was a pink slip, which the union claimed was excessive for a worker with such long service and lack of previous discipline. The BC arbitrator ruled that the company had just cause to terminate. The oiler’s trivialization of his wrongdoing and cavalier attitude toward safety made him a serious risk for repeat offences [[West Fraser Mills \(100 Mile House Operation\) v United Steelworkers, Local 1-2017](#), 2025 CanLII 57034 (BC LA), June 5, 2025].

Workplace Harassment: No Workers’ Comp Benefits for Worker Who Instigates Stressful Confrontation

A black truck driver diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder with anxious distress (single episode, moderate) sought workers’ comp benefits claiming he developed the condition as a result of being bullied and harassed at work, including one specific incident of aggressive racial abuse and slurs in a public setting by his supervisor and then being suspended for the incident. The BC Workers’ Comp Appeals Tribunal ruled that while no doubt highly stressful, neither the incident nor subsequent suspension would constitute what a reasonable person in the driver’s position a “traumatic” event or “significant work-related stressor” justifying mental disorder benefits. The evidence showed that there was bad blood between the 2 before the incident and that the driver instigated the altercation during which he was “equally abusive” to the supervisor [[A2400536 \(Re\)](#), 2025 CanLII 44531 (BC WCAT), April 30, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [Workplace Harassment Prevention and Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.