

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Labour Relations

Sep 19: That's the last day [to comment](#) on the Panel [report](#) review of BC's labour relations and trade union laws. The Panel did **not** recommend adding ride-hail, food delivery, and other gig workers to the definition of "employees" with unionization rights. The current *Labour Relations Code* definition is broad enough to include those workers, the Panel concluded.

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

New Laws

Aug 22: The B.C. Agriculture and Food Export Program launched its fourth round of funding offering financial support to food and beverage processors via 3 export-focused funding streams—consumer promotional activities, marketing collateral and advertising campaigns, and trade shows and events. Deadline to apply: September 5.

New Laws

Aug 12: The CleanBC Industry program is investing \$35 million to support the efforts of companies to adopt cleaner technologies and make the transition to electrification and net-zero operations. action. Applications for the 2025 round are open via 2 funding streams: [Innovation Accelerator \(IA\)](#) (deadline to apply: Sept. 24), and [Feasibility Studies \(FS\)](#) (deadline to apply: Sept. 21).

New Laws

Jul 24: BC announced that it will provide nearly \$2 million in Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) support to help 51 local communities improve their emergency response, evacuation planning and public notification programs in preparing for emergencies.

Health & Safety

Jul 14: WorkSafeBC is proposing to add new rules requiring employers to ensure that different kinds of safety equipment is "certified safe for use" at designated intervals. The rule, which currently applies only to self-erecting tower cranes, would be expanded to include all tower cranes, as well as mobile cranes, boom trucks, vehicle-mounted elevating work platforms, self-propelled boom-supported elevating work platforms, and excavation poles and masts. Deadline [to comment](#): September 5.

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

Drugs & Alcohol

Jul 31: The BC Coroners Service reported that there were 145 illegal drug toxicity deaths in the province in May and 147 in June. The cities with the highest number of drug deaths this year are Vancouver, Surrey and Greater Victoria. Fentanyl has been

found in the bodies of 70% of victims in 2025, followed by methamphetamine (52%) and cocaine (51%).

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

CASES

Immigration: Employer Not Responsible for Immigration Consultant's Illegal Recruiting Fees

Temporary foreign workers filed a class action against the convenience store that hired them for, among other things, breaching its fiduciary duty to them by hiring an immigration consultant that charged them illegal fees for jobs. The store denied responsibility, contending that the consulting firm wasn't acting as its agent during the recruitment process. The store lost in the lower court but got the last laugh when the BC Court of Appeal reversed the judgment, finding that, which ruled that the firm was not, in fact, the store's agent because it lacked the legal authority to make binding agreements on the store's behalf [*Mac's Convenience Stores Inc. v. Basyal*, 2025 BCCA 284 (CanLII), August 8, 2025].

Action Point: Find out what companies and their HR directors need to know to [navigate the immigration law maze](#).

Employment Contracts: Incentives Plans' Mandatory Arbitration Clause Is Enforceable

A software exec sued his employer for failure to pay \$103,000 in bonuses and commissions allegedly due under the firm's incentive plans. The firm moved to dismiss the case citing the arbitration clauses contained in the plan documents. The court ruled that the arbitration clauses were unenforceable and denied the motion. But the BC Court of Appeal reversed the lower court's ruling. The arbitration clause was a fundamental part of the plan agreements rather than a unilateral amendment imposed by the employer without consideration, the High Court reasoned. Result: The case had to go to arbitration [*Aspen Technology, Inc. v. Wiederhold*, 2025 BCCA 261 (CanLII), July 28, 2025].

Termination: OK to Fire Cook for Sexually Harassing Female Subordinates Half His Age

The union admitted that a male cook in his 60s sexually harassed multiple female dietary assistants in their early 20s but blamed the problem on the workplace culture in which sexual harassment was "tolerated, normalized, and in some cases actively engaged in by those in positions of authority." But the BC arbitrator was unwilling to let the cook off the hook. Although this was the first incident of discipline, the cook's practice of making sexually inappropriate remarks and touching vulnerable women subordinates less than half his age was a pattern that persisted over almost the full 3 1/2 years of his employment. Not apologizing or expressing any regret for his conduct did little to help the case for reinstatement [*Well Being Services Ltd. dba Summerland Seniors Village v Hospital Employees' Union*, 2025 CanLII 83073 (BC LA), August 7, 2025].

Action Point: Use the HR Insider [sexual harassment policy template](#) to review and improve your own policy.