

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leaves of Absence

Oct 20: Newly tabled [Bill 30](#) provides up to 27 weeks' unpaid leave for employees who can't work for at least a one-week period due to serious illness or injury. Leave must be taken during a 52-week period and employees must obtain a doctor or nurse practitioner certificate verifying medical need for leave and dates it's required.

Action Point: BC is just one of the many provinces that have changed their sick and long-term illness leave laws since the pandemic. Find out how to implement a legally sound [Sick Leave Compliance Game Plan](#) at your own workplace along with a [summary of the sick leave rules](#) in each part of Canada.

Pay Equity

Nov 1: That's the deadline for employers with 300-999 employees in BC to [prepare and post](#) their first annual pay transparency report regarding gender pay gaps under the *Pay Transparency Act*. Employers with 1,000 or more employees were required to post their first report in November 2024. Employers with 50-299 employees will be required to post their first report by November 1, 2026. Reporting isn't required for employers with fewer than 50 employees.

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

New Laws

Oct 21: New legislation ([Bill 20](#)) to ensure that construction contractors, subcontractors, and workers get paid fairly and on time passed Second Reading. Based on models that have worked well in Ontario and Alberta, the BC law sets specific timelines for payment on construction projects and establishes a new mechanism for resolving payment disputes quickly via an independent adjudicator.

Employment Benefits

Oct 23: Although mergers and windups resulted in a small decline in plan numbers to 610, pension plan membership rose 4%, as of December 31, 2024, to almost 1.34 million, according to [BCFSA's annual report for 2024](#). During the year, 28% of Defined Benefit plans reported using excess assets to offset required employer contributions while total contributions rose 9%, despite the use of contribution holidays. DB plans paid over \$7.6 billion in pensions and transfers to members while target benefit plans paid \$694 million.

Privacy

Oct 27: Third Reading for [Bill 17](#) to increase the minimum penalties to victims of *Intimate Images Protection Act* violations from \$5,000 to as high as \$75,000. Enacted 2 years ago, the Act enables people to apply online to the Civil Resolution Tribunal to get their intimate images off the internet, stop their distribution and seek

monetary compensation from the person, social media company or website that shared the image.

Action Point: Digital privacy is also a potential liability risk for employers. Find out how to protect your organization from [revenge porn and cyberbullying liability](#).

Workplace Violence

Oct 23: The BC Assembly passed [Bill 18](#) requiring post-secondary institutions to implement a sexual violence policy that, among other things, sets out procedures for making and responding to disclosures about a member of the institutional community, including imposition of discipline against those found to have engaged in wrongdoing. Post-secondary institutions would also have to make their sexual violence policy publicly available on their websites.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [Workplace Violence Prevention Game Plan](#) at a school or any other kind of site.

Workplace Violence

Oct 24: The Ministry of Children and Family Development will provide \$750,000 in federal funding to expand the reach of domestic-violence intervention programs as part of the Canada-British Columbia bilateral agreement to end gender-based violence in the province.

Action Point: Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence.

Drugs & Alcohol

Oct 9: According to preliminary data, there were 153 toxic drug deaths in BC in July and another 149 in August. The Fraser and Vancouver Coastal health authorities have accounted for 55% of all such deaths during the year so far. Fentanyl continues to be the most-common substance detected in toxicological testing having been detected in 70% of victims.

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [fitness for duty policy to control substance abuse](#) at your workplace.

Drugs & Alcohol

Oct 22: BC is 2 steps away from passing first-of-its-kind legislation, [Bill 24](#), empowering the province to take legal action to hold vaping product manufacturers and wholesalers accountable for public harms resulting from misleading promotion of vaping products. The Bill is patterned on the legislation that paved the way for the recent \$3.6 billion landmark settlement against tobacco companies.

Action Point: Find out how to comply with [workplace smoking laws](#).

Workers' Comp

Nov 1: WorkSafeBC will no longer mail paper statements. Employers that have any credit or debit balances in their account will instead receive an email notification advising them to check their statement online. However, if your payroll report is currently mailed to you, you'll receive both the paper report and email notification until the end of December.

CASES

Workers' Comp: Top Court Upholds Denial of Mental Injury Benefits Claim

A powerline technician claimed he was suspended and eventually fired from his job for complaining about being bullied by his co-workers. After achieving partial victory on the reprisal claim, the technician sought workers' comp benefits for mental injury. The WCB rejected the claim, finding that the technician's mental disorder was caused by neither a "traumatic event" nor exposure to a "significant workplace stressor." The case went all the way to the BC Court of Appeal, which ruled against the technician on procedural grounds because he waited too long to appeal [[Lawrence v. British Columbia \(Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal\)](#), 2025 BCCA 343 (CanLII), October 6, 2025].

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

Termination: Single Act of Dishonesty Not Just Cause to Fire Remorseful Employee

Did a millwright deserve to get fired for lying when he told company safety investigators that he was wearing required cut-resistant protective gloves when he cut his finger on a clipper knife while trying to clear a jam in a veneer machine. Although it was a single act of dishonesty, the company argued that it was just cause to terminate because it involved a crucial safety matter. The BC arbitrator disagreed and reduced the penalty to a 4-week suspension. Mitigating factors: The millwright had a previously clean safety record, he apologized, admitted his lie in a second interview and expressed sincere remorse for his actions [[Cipa Lumber Co. Ltd. v United Steelworkers, Local 2009](#), 2025 CanLII 103390 (BC LA), October 7, 2025].

Action Point: Find out [when lying is and is not just cause for termination](#).