

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

Jan 30: British Columbia and BC Hydro launched a new competitive process for AI and data centres projects that prioritize clean electricity. The allocation targets for these projects are for as much as 400 megawatts for the first two years. The new requirement doesn't apply to traditional industries, like mining, liquefied natural gas, forestry, manufacturing or hydrogen for domestic use.

Action Point: Find out how to guard against AI legal and liability risks by implementing a legally sound [workplace artificial intelligence use policy](#).

New Laws

Jan 21: British Columbia extended the environmental permits issued for the Mt. Milligan mine expansion near Fort St. James by seven years, allowing the project to operate until 2035. The government says the extension will preserve 574 jobs and as much as \$400 million in projected capital spending.

Training

Feb 6: The federal government announced an investment of nearly \$10 million to help the BC Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council (commonly referred to as SkillPlan) develop a national energy assessment training program for the insulator (heat and frost) Red Seal trade that will enable thousands of workers to develop the new skills required for a green economy.

Workers' Compensation

March 15: March 15 is the deadline for the second group of British Columbia employers to submit their actual 2025 payroll numbers and 2026 estimates to WorkSafeBC. The reporting deadline, which is based on the last two digits of the employer account number, for the third group is March 31.

Action Point: Look up the [2026 workers' compensation premium rates](#) in each part of Canada.

Workers' Compensation

Jan 20: WorkSafeBC issued an [Expression of Interest](#) seeking health professionals and medical experts to serve on a new Expert Advisory Panel charged with developing a Clinical Recovery Framework for injured workers that will clearly define what recovery means and establish evidence-informed principles to guide effective recovery management.

CASES

Discipline: Nonculpable Safety Infractions Merit a Written Warning, Not Demotion

A paper mill demoted a senior equipment operator for failure to obey safety rules, concluding that while his intentions were good, he just wasn't capable of performing the job safely as he was trained to do. The union claimed the demotion was unfair and potentially disability discrimination since it was based on "nonculpable incapacity." The British Columbia arbitrator upheld the grievance. While a written warning would have been a reasonable response, permanent demotion was excessive. There was also evidence that the mill's perception that the operator had a mental disability factored into the demotion decision. However, the arbitrator stopped short of ordering the mill to pay damages for acting in bad faith [[Cariboo Pulp and Paper Co. v Unifor, Local 1115](#), 2026 CanLII 4947 (BC LA), January 5, 2026].

Action Point: The *Cariboo* case illustrates the importance of not just having but consistently implementing a legally sound [progressive discipline policy](#) at your workplace to enforce safety and other HR rules and policies.

Health & Safety: Venerable Retailer Fined \$521,694 for Repeat Storage Rack Violations

A retailer that's been selling plumbing supplies in British Columbia since opening its first store in Victoria in 1892 was fined \$521,694 for OHS violations. WorkSafeBC inspectors issued the penalty after observing damaged and unsafe storage rack violations in use at the company's Penticton store, a high-risk and repeat violation, as was the second violation cited of failing to ensure that storage racks were installed by a qualified person according to the manufacturer's or an engineer's instructions [[Andrew Sheret Limited](#), January 8, 2026].

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