

# British Columbia

## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Minimum Wage

Feb 26: British Columbia's general minimum wage will increase 40 cents to \$18.25 per hour on June 1. The same 2.1% hike will apply to resident caretakers, live-in home-support workers, and live-in camp leaders. The app-based ride-hailing and delivery-service minimum wage will rise to \$21.89. Increases to minimum piece rates for hand-harvested crops take effect on December 31.

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

### Employment Standards

Mar 10: [Bill 10](#), which has passed Second Reading, aims to speed up and improve the Employment Standards Branch (ESB) employee complaint and dispute-resolution process for non-union employees set out in the *Employment Standards Act* and for TFWs under the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*. Approximately 75% of resolution meetings at the ESB result in voluntary resolution within 30 to 45 days from when a file is first assigned to an ESB officer.

### Payroll

Feb 17: The newly proposed provincial Budget 2026 calls for increasing the tax rate of the first income tax bracket by less than 0.6 percentage points, from 5.06% to 5.60%, resulting in an additional \$76 in income taxes for the average taxpayer in 2026. However, more than 40% of taxpayers will see savings when combined with the increase in BC tax reduction credit. BC will also pause tax bracket indexing from 2027 until 2030.

### New Laws

Mar 12: Under newly passed legislation ([Bill 5](#)) goods that may be sold or used in another Canadian province may now be sold or used in British Columbia regardless of provincial regulations relating to the goods' sale or use. The same principle applies to services supplied in another province. The government will issue regulations supplying the operational details of the new free trade and labour mobility system.

**Action Point:** Find out about the [5 ways the new interprovincial free trade and labour mobility regulations will impact HR operations](#).

### Immigration

Mar 17: BC's campaign to attract skilled healthcare workers from the US has paid off. As of January 2026, more than 400 US-trained health professionals have accepted job offers in the province, including rural and remote regions where such professionals are most desperately needed. The province has received over 2,750 job applications as of March 2026 from US doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, and allied health professionals as a result of its targeted recruitment efforts.

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

### **New Laws**

Mar 8: British Columbia made the move to permanent daylight savings time, meaning clocks will no longer “fall back” to standard time come November. The permanent switchover is expected to minimize seasonal disruption, improve overall health, and reduce traffic accidents on the drive home from work during winter months. Pacific time will be set seven hours behind coordinated universal time (UTC-7), matching the current offset used during daylight saving time.

### **Training**

Mar 5: British Columbia and Ottawa agreed to invest \$70.4 million over three years via the new Canada–British Columbia Workforce Tariff Response to support workers in softwood lumber, steel, and other industries affected by tariffs. The new funding will be directed to unemployed workers seeking to gain new skills for in-demand jobs, workers of companies participating in Work-Sharing agreements seeking to upskill or retrain to adapt to industry changes, and employed workers seeking new skills to improve their resiliency within tariff-affected companies.

**Action Point:** Find out about the [8 ways the U.S. tariffs will affect](#) Canadian workplaces and HR activities.

### **New Laws**

Mar 2: The federal Regional Tariff Response Initiative (RTRI) announced that it will invest \$13 million to support projects across British Columbia’s Southern Interior designed to help businesses impacted by tariffs boost productivity, cut costs, build more resilient supply chains, and reach new markets. The RTRI is targeting the money to sectors that have been hit hardest by global trade disruptions, including forestry, equipment manufacturing, and value-added wood manufacturing.

### **Labour Relations**

Mar 5: Newly tabled [Private Member Bill M233](#) proposes to ban the issuance of solicitations for public sector construction projects that require or have the effect of requiring successful vendors to employ unionized employees or non-unionized employees for projects.

### **Privacy**

Feb 23: The BC Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) joined 61 other data protection authorities from around the globe in publishing a Joint Statement on use of AI to generate realistic images and videos depicting identifiable individuals without their knowledge and consent. Operators of such systems should implement robust safeguards to ensure privacy and transparency, along with a mechanism individuals can use to request the removal of their personal information.

### **Health & Safety**

Feb 26: Musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) remain the most common workplace injury in British Columbia, accounting for about 30% of time-loss claims and over 25% of total

claims costs. WorkSafeBC accepted over 88,000 time-loss claims for MSIs from 2020 to 2024, resulting in over \$2.35 billion in claim costs. While MSIs occur in all industries, rates are highest in health care, retail, local government, restaurants, public schools, and the skilled trades. Compliance with OHS MSI requirements will be a priority for targeted WorkSafeBC inspections in 2026.

**Action Point:** Find out about the [5 keys of implementing an effective ergonomics program](#) to prevent MSIs at your workplace.

### **Health & Safety**

Mar 3: Workers will soon have to be certified and registered with WorkSafeBC to operate a crane in British Columbia. Crane owners will also need permits. At least seven workers have been killed in BC crane incidents over the past five years. The new licensing and permitting rules will ensure that crane equipment and operators meet specific safety standards.

### **Workplace Violence**

Mar 9: First Reading for legislation that would expand safe-access zones at schools and create them at places of worship in which people would be banned from engaging in activity designed to interfere or prevent access to those locations. “Children should be able to get to school, and people should be able to visit their place of worship, without facing intimidation,” noted the British Columbia Attorney General in introducing the bills.

**Action Point:** Are you doing enough to protect your employees against violence at work? Find out about the 10 things you must do to [prevent workplace violence](#).

### **Drugs & Alcohol**

Mar 12: Toxic drugs claimed 150 lives in British Columbia in January. While a 10% decrease from January 2025 (167), that’s still 4.8 deaths per day. Nearly three-quarters of the lives lost in January 2026 were between 30 and 59 years of age, and 80% were male. Fentanyl and its analogues continue to account for a significant majority of deaths, with nearly eight in every 10 tests returning positive results. Smoking remains the dominant mode of consumption, accounting for 75% of all drug deaths in January.

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

### **Workers’ Compensation**

Mar 1: *Workers’ Compensation Act* changes will add eight more cancers to the list of cancers presumed to be work-related when suffered by firefighters: skin cancer, mesothelioma, soft tissue sarcoma, as well as laryngeal, tracheal, bronchial, nose, and pharynx cancers. That list also includes 10 other forms of cancer.

## **CASES**

### **Privacy: US AI Company Is Subject to BC Privacy Laws, High Court Rules**

The British Columbia Privacy Commissioner ruled that US-based facial recognition technology company Clearview AI Inc. violated the *Protection of Information and Privacy Act* (PIPA) by collecting facial data of British Columbians from social media websites to use for its product without consent. **Result:** It banned Clearview from offering its facial recognition services in British Columbia and required it to stop collecting such facial data from British Columbians and delete the facial data already in its possession. Clearview argued that it was an out-of-province entity not subject to PIPA. The BC Court of Appeal disagreed, finding that Clearview's internet activities in the province were a "sufficient connection" to establish the application of PIPA. "Content providers may physically reside, conduct their business, and locate their servers in a particular location, yet their content is readily accessible from anywhere in the world," the Court reasoned. Nor was it unreasonable for the Commissioner to interpret PIPA as banning Clearview from collecting facial data without consent [*Clearview AI Inc. v. British Columbia (Information and Privacy Commissioner)*, 2026 BCCA 67 (CanLII), February 18, 2026].

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

### **Discipline: Cursing at Supervisor Isn't Insubordination When Supervisor Provokes It**

Getting into a heated argument with his fleet manager in the truck yard probably wasn't the greatest career move for the tow truck driver already under a last-chance agreement. But the union insisted that the manager provoked the confrontation, while noting that it took place while the driver was off duty in contesting the 12-day suspension for insubordination. Given the driver's disciplinary history and use of profanity with the manager, he should be grateful we didn't just fire him, the company countered. Because the incident was brief and there were no direct eyewitnesses, the BC arbitrator had to piece together what probably happened based on the driver's and manager's accounts. In so doing, it found that the manager probably started the fight and lobbed the first "f bomb", provoking the driver to do likewise. **Bottom Line:** There were no grounds for discipline. This wasn't gross insubordination but a personal confrontation between two men who didn't like each other that occurred while the driver was off-duty and in the yard for personal business [*All-Tech Transport Ltd. v Teamsters Local Union no. 31*, 2026 CanLII 21539 (BC LA), March 6, 2026].

**Action Point:** Find out how to create and implement an effective [Insubordination and Insolence Policy](#) at your workplace.