

Month In Review – British Columbia



LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Apr 15: British Columbia is increasing its general minimum wage 40 cents to \$18.25 per hour on June 1. The same 2.1% hike will apply to the separate minimum wages for 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 [how to avoid common payroll errors](#) when adjusting to minimum wage increases.

Employment Standards

Apr 2: Newly passed [Bill 10](#) includes improvements to the Employment Standards Branch (ESB) employee complaint and dispute-resolution process for non-union employees set out in the *Employment Standards Act* and for temporary foreign workers (TFWs) under the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act*. About 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.

Leaves of Absence

Apr 2: Proposed new legislation ([Bill 18](#)) gives local elected officials in all parts of British Columbia 26 consecutive weeks of parental leave starting as many as four weeks before or 26 weeks after the expected birth/adoption date. The new uniform leave rights cover mayors, councillors, regional district directors, Islands Trust trustees, and Cultus Lake Park Board members.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [Parental Leave Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Employment Benefits

Mar 25: The British Columbia Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) issued new Guidelines to help pension administrators keep the personal information of members

and beneficiaries secure and guard their information systems against cyber and other threats.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a [Data Breach Response & Damage Control Game Plan](#) to safeguard your company against cyberattack.

New Laws

Apr 9: BC-based Atlas Engineered Products Ltd. will receive over \$4 million from the federal [Investments in Forest Industry Transformation \(IFIT\) program](#) to build a new, cutting-edge wood manufacturing facility, powered by advanced robotics. Forest sector businesses can use the new, [single-window pathfinding service](#) to find out about and apply for federal funding opportunities.

Training

Apr 10: Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) announced that it will invest \$13.3 million over the next four years in new apprenticeship grants to address labour shortages in the automotive collision repair industry. Eligible ICBC Repair Network facilities will be able [to apply](#) for grants of up to \$56,500 per apprenticeship covering a substantial portion of employers' apprenticeship costs.

New Laws

Mar 30: Newly tabled [Bill 14](#) would authorize British Columbia Timber Sales (BCTS) to issue timber sales licences for a wider range of fibre-generating and forest stewardship activities, including commercial thinning, wildfire risk reduction, and salvage of damaged trees. The government claims that the new licensing regime will create jobs and increase the province's fibre supply by as much as 17,700 truckloads, or 800,000 cubic metres.

New Laws

Apr 14: [Bill 15](#), which has passed Second Reading, would make the environmental assessment process that new projects must navigate more predictable by establishing clear rules governing how issues raised by First Nations are identified and resolved during the process. The Bill also provides for third-party dispute resolution if the Province and a First Nation can't reach consensus at milestones during the environmental assessment process.

New Laws

Mar 16: The British Columbia Wildfire Service (BCWS) has received record numbers of applications for wildland firefighter positions ahead of the 2026 wildfire season. There are over 600 year-round positions available. The agency is also providing specialized training for wildland urban interface operations to more than 1,700 fire departments, First Nations, and contractors.

Health & Safety

Apr 24: Public comments closed on WorkSafeBC's proposed [OHS changes](#) affecting employers' obligation to certify certain kinds of dangerous equipment as being safe for use, including tower cranes, placing booms, masts, and truck-mounted concrete pumps with integral placing booms. The changes address how often certification is required and how and where certification records are kept.

Health & Safety

Apr 13: The British Columbia Assembly passed 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 five years.

Workplace Harassment

Apr 2: Newly tabled [Bill 17](#) would authorize the government to adopt a province-wide uniform code of conduct for all local elected officials in British Columbia. The code of conduct, which is expected to be in place after the October 17, 2026 general local elections, would address bullying or harassment in meetings, harassment of staff, and disrespectful behaviour between elected officials. Such codes, to the extent they exist, are currently created and enforced at the local level.

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

Workplace Violence

Apr 2: Third 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 BC 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

Apr 15: The British Columbia Coroners Service reported that there were 115 suspected toxic drug deaths in the province in February, roughly 4.1 per day. The Fraser and Vancouver Coastal health authorities have reported the highest number of unregulated drug deaths in 2026 (with 62 and 74, respectively), making up 51% of all reported deaths during the year.

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

CASES

Employment Contract: COVID Vaccination Refusal Didn't Frustrate Doctor's Contract

At the height of the pandemic, the Northern Health Authority (NHA) terminated the service contract of a pediatrician for not getting the COVID vaccine, claiming that the contract had been frustrated since vaccination was ordered by the Public Health Officer (PHO). The arbitrator disagreed and awarded the pediatrician \$388,512 in wrongful dismissal and breach of contract damages. NHA appealed to the BC Court of Appeal. But the high court concluded that the arbitrator's ruling that the PHO vaccination order was neither a legal change nor supervening event that frustrated the purpose of the pediatrician's contract was legally sound and not a clear mistake of law [[Northern Health Authority v. du Plessis](#), 2026 BCCA 143 (CanLII), April 9, 2026].

Action Point: The \$388,000 damage award is a vivid reminder of the price companies can pay for not properly managing the legal intricacies of vaccination refusals. While *du Plessis* involved contract law, terminating employees for not getting vaccinated may also be deemed a violation of an employer's duty to reasonably accommodate disabilities, religion, or other protected characteristics under human rights laws. Find out how to avoid discrimination liability risks when [enforcing a mandatory vaccination policy](#).

Health & Safety: Company's OHS Training Program Doesn't Meet Due Diligence Standard

A countertop production company was fined \$67,435 for failing to provide proper safety training and supervision to a 22-year-old worker who suffered a partial amputation of two fingers while operating a table saw at one of its plants. The BC Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal (WCAT) upheld the penalty and rejected the company's due diligence defence. **Exhibit A:** The firm's OHS manual contained a page for the company's president to sign and date but the spaces for both signature and date were blank. The company's recent record of being on the receiving end of several WorkSafeBC OHS orders, including for having an inadequate OHS program, didn't help its case [[A2201154 \(Re\)](#), 2026 CanLII 21304 (BC WCAT), February 3, 2026].

Action Point: Find out what [due diligence](#) is and how it helps you avoid liability for OHS violations.

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