

Month in Review – Nova Scotia



LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Apr 1: Nova Scotia's minimum wage increased from \$16.50 to \$16.75 per hour. The general minimum wage will go up another 25 cents to \$17.00 per hour on October 1. The latest increases come a year after the province raised its minimum wage by \$1.30 per hour in 2025.

Action Point: Find out [how to avoid common payroll errors](#) when implementing minimum wage increases.

Minimum Wage

Apr 1: The minimum wage for Logging and Forest Operations time workers increased from \$16.50 to \$16.75 per hour and for other workers from \$3,243.90 to \$3,293.05 per month. On October 1, the rates increase again to \$17.00 per hour and \$3,342.20 per month, respectively.

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

New Laws

Apr 9: [Bill 193](#), the *Powering the Economy Act*, creating new laws and systems to tax, finance, and regulate offshore wind, geothermal, natural hydrogen, helium, and carbon storage projects in Nova Scotia, passed the Assembly and received Royal Assent.

Training

Apr 9: The Assembly passed amendments to the *Community Colleges Act* ([Bill 196](#)) establishing a new Institute of Skilled Trades (IST) at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), to be led by an industry-led council and funded by a five-year, \$25-million investment for new innovative equipment and tools to enhance classrooms, training, and workshops across the province. The Bill has received Royal Assent.

Health & Safety

Mar 23: WCB Nova Scotia published a new [Safety Bulletin](#) explaining what employers and contractors must do to comply with OHS regulations requiring clean and readily available washrooms at outdoor and temporary worksites.

Health & Safety

Apr 1: Nova Scotia recorded its lowest workplace injury rate ever in 2025 at 1.21 per 100 covered workers, which is on track to meet the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) objective of 1.15 per 100 by 2030. Days lost from work due to injury has dropped 13% to 226 days, as compared to the baseline of 259 days in 2023.

Action Point: Find out [how to avoid injuries and workers' compensation claims by creating a vibrant workplace health and safety culture](#) at your company.

Drugs & Alcohol

Apr 9: Newly passed [Bill 200](#) amends the *Cannabis Control Act* to improve public safety. Highlights: Higher fines for violations, new offence for landlords that allow their property to be used for illegal cannabis sale or distribution, use of peace officers to enforce the law in addition to the police and loosening of courtroom evidence rules making it easier to prove presence of cannabis.

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

Workers' Compensation

Apr 15: The Nova Scotia WCB approved a new [Extended Earnings Replacement Benefit \(EERB\) Review Policy](#). Last Fall, the Assembly passed Bill 144 amending the *Workers' Compensation Act* to allow the WCB to review an EERB at any time instead of only at fixed intervals of 36 and 60 months under previous law. The new WCB EERB Review Policy officially implements the change.

CASES

Health & Safety: Mere Possibility of Crane Collapse Not Enough to Justify OHS Compliance Order

OHS inspectors issued a Stop-Work and five Compliance Orders to an excavation subcontractor after determining that the excavation work was too close to a tower crane at the site. The subcontractor appealed the Order to comply with the requirement to "ensure that a utility pole, building or other structure is provided adequate support or removed if the utility pole, building or other structure may become unstable because of excavation or trenching activity." The Labour Board set aside the Order along with the \$500 Administrative Monetary Penalty, reasoning that the risk of the crane's collapsing, while possible, wasn't probable. Now it was the government's return to appeal. But the Nova Scotia high court ruled that the Board's decision wasn't erroneous and disallowed the appeal [[Nova Scotia \(Occupational Health and Safety\) v. DJ Excavation Inc.](#), 2026 NSCA 24 (CanLII), March 17, 2026].

Action Point: This is a noteworthy case because courts and tribunals typically defer

to OHS enforcers and prosecutors in interpreting the terms of OHS regulations. That's why employers lose OHS appeals far more frequently than they win them. While it deals with technical excavations issues, the principles in this case in terms of inspector discretion would also apply to other enforcement situations. Find out how to survive [surprise government OHS inspections](#).

Discipline: Firing Forklift Driver for Not Reporting Storage Rack Damage Is Too Severe

While acknowledging that discipline was in order, the union objected to a warehouse's decision to fire a forklift operator for not reporting damage to the metal racking system used to store pallets without following the progressive discipline system. The warehouse insisted that termination without progressive discipline was justified because the unreported damage threatened the integrity of the racking system and increased the risk of collapse. After hearing all of the evidence, the Nova Scotia arbitrator ruled that termination was excessive given the operator's lack of prior discipline and the fact that other the warehouse hadn't fired other workers who committed the same basic violation in the past. So, the arbitrator ordered reinstatement with the worker getting back his lost seniority but not his pay or benefits [[UNIFOR, Local 1944 v Lineage, Inc, 2026 CanLII 25105 \(NS LA\), March 20, 2026](#)].

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound [progressive discipline policy](#) at your workplace that you can use to enforce safety and other HR rules and policies.

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