

This newsletter is to inform you of recent changes & trends regarding health and safety.

The Turning Point is a monthly newsletter covering topics from various industries and sectors. The Turning Point will respond to your inquiries and inform you of current services and updates regarding

Raising the Standard Consulting Inc.

Employment law Canada 2026: What employers need to prepare for



2025 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: WORKPLACE OHS ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICIES ACROSS CANADA

The recent coming into force of legislation in Nova Scotia requiring employers to implement an anti-harassment policy marks a new era of policy alignment across Canadian provinces.

Nova Scotia recently became the final province to statutorily impose a positive obligation on employers via occupational health and safety (OHS) legislation regarding anti-harassment policies in the workplace. Previously, Nova Scotia's OHS legislation

encouraged but did not strictly require workplaces to implement an anti-harassment policy.

All provincially regulated employers are now subject to an obligation under their respective OHS legislation regarding the existence of an anti-harassment policy, regardless of the size of the workplace or the number of workers. However, the definition of "harassment" and specific requirements of the anti-harassment policy still vary across provinces.

Employees are protected from harassment in the workplace under multiple statutory schemes. Employers should be aware that, in addition to OHS obligations, prohibitions against workplace harassment based on legislatively protected human rights grounds create separate obligations that may require additional proactive measures by employers.

This bulletin provides an overview of key statutory employer obligations under provincial OHS legislation regarding anti-harassment policies, broken down by province.

Alberta

- The *Occupational Health and Safety Code* regulation requires all employers to develop and implement a harassment prevention plan.
- The regulation lists required features of the policy, which include procedures on how to report harassment and how complaints will be investigated, as well as confidentiality protection provisions.

British Columbia

- WorkSafeBC, the provincial agency that interprets relevant occupational health and safety legislation and drafts interpretive policies, requires all employers to develop a policy statement with respect to workplace bullying and harassment.
- Policy Item P2-21-2 also requires employers to inform workers about the existence of the policy statement and to provide training to supervisors and workers on recognizing, responding to and reporting bullying and harassment.

Manitoba

- The *Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation* mandates that all employers develop and implement a written policy on harassment prevention.
- This policy on harassment prevention must contain certain statements outlined in the regulation and must be posted in a conspicuous place in the workplace.

New Brunswick

- *Regulation 91-191* under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requires employers to establish and implement a written code of practice for harassment that is sufficient to protect the health and safety of all employees.
- Additionally, employers must annually review the code of practice with relevant workplace committees and must implement a training program with respect to the code for all employees and supervisors.

[...]

Takeaway

Employers — particularly those with operations in multiple Canadian provinces — should regularly review their workplace harassment policies to ensure compliance with relevant statutory obligations. Employees should also be properly informed of any updates to these policies and should receive any required training in connection with these policies.

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INDUSTRIAL FIRE ERUPTS AT TORONTO WOODWORKING FACILITY

Fire crews responded to a significant industrial fire at a woodworking facility in Toronto's west end on Wednesday morning.

The incident occurred on Primrose Avenue, near Lansdowne Avenue and Dupont Street, according to a CP24 report citing Toronto Fire officials.

Authorities reported that the fire broke out at a site believed to be used for woodworking. When emergency responders arrived, they encountered heavy smoke and visible flames coming from the building. Firefighters remained on the scene and continued to actively battle the blaze throughout the morning.

No injuries have been reported, and officials confirmed that no one was inside the facility at the time the fire started. The cause of the fire has not yet been determined, and an investigation is expected to follow.

Toronto Fire told CP24 that the situation was under control, but crews would remain

on site to ensure the fire was fully extinguished and to monitor for any potential flare-ups. The incident did not result in any reported injuries to workers or emergency personnel.

Officials have not released further details about the extent of the damage or the potential impact on nearby businesses and residents. Updates are expected as the investigation continues.

How can employers promote fire safety?

Employers can be better prepared to respond in case of fire if they have fire safety plans. According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), these plans are often required by your local Fire Code, especially for certain buildings and occupancy rates.

"Plans should be specific to the property or business. Conducting an audit or review of the property or business will help identify factors that could affect fire

safety,” said CCOHS. “Items in this audit include site layout, points of entry/exit, roadways, use of the building, where and how items are stored, how items are used, water or fire department connections, alarm systems, sprinkler systems, and many other factors.”

The government agency notes that while specific requirements may vary by jurisdiction, in general, a fire safety plan should include:

- Emergency procedures to be used in case of fire, including how to:
 - sound the alarm,
 - notify the fire department, building or business officials, or other designated staff as specified in the plan (e.g., all telephones on site should have the emergency phone numbers listed and the address of the property posted close by),
 - evacuate occupants (e.g., procedures occupants should follow when the fire alarm sounds),
 - evacuate persons who may need assistance, and
 - confine, control, and extinguish the fire where possible.
- How, and how often fire drills will be conducted.
- Information for any designated staff who have been given fire safety duties and responsibilities.
- Organization, education, and training for staff with fire safety duties.
- Information and actions to take to prevent or control fire hazards for that building or business, where appropriate.

- Other staff education and training that may be necessary.
- Detailed maintenance procedures for fire protection systems.
- Diagrams and instructions about the type, location, and operation of any fire or emergency systems.
- Identification of alternative fire safety measures.
- Allow fire department access to the building and to the fire location within the building.

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B.C. GOVERNMENT FINED \$759,000 FOLLOWING DEATH OF WILDFIRE FIREFIGHTER

WorkSafeBC has issued a fine of \$759,000 against the British Columbia government following the death of a young wildfire firefighter and a separate incident that endangered five others.

The fine stems in part from the death of 25-year-old Zak Muise, a firefighter with Bigcat Wildfire, who was killed in July 2023 when his all-terrain vehicle rolled over a steep drop while battling the Donnie Creek wildfire — the largest ever recorded in the province.

WorkSafeBC's investigation revealed that neither Muise nor his supervisor was wearing a helmet at the time, and that critical safety equipment, including a passenger seatbelt and retention netting, was either unused or damaged, according to a CBC report.

WorkSafeBC stated, "The statutory maximum penalty reflects the seriousness of the violations," and emphasised that such fines are intended to "motivate the employer receiving the penalty — and other employers — to comply with occupational health and safety legislation and regulation, and to keep their workplaces safe."

The penalty also covers a second incident in which five Brazilian firefighters were trapped by flames during a planned burn in the Shuswap region.

During the burn in the Shuswap region on Aug. 17 that year, a team of Brazilian firefighters became trapped by "extreme fire behaviour" following a controlled

burn operation conducted by the BC Wildfire Service, CBC previously noted, citing a report from WorkSafeBC.

With their escape route cut off, the crew was forced to shelter beneath power lines, burn off surrounding vegetation to protect their truck from ignition, and spend the night amid falling trees, heavy smoke, and flames. They were only rescued the following day after another crew “cut their way into the site” through hazardous terrain, according to the report.

“The employer failed to provide its workers with the information, instruction, training, and supervision necessary to ensure their health and safety, a repeated and high-risk violation,” according to the WorkSafeBC decision.

The Ministry of Forests has expressed “questions and concerns” about the findings and intends to request a review of the penalty decision, arguing that two unrelated incidents were bundled together, according to the CBC report. Still, Forests Minister Ravi Parmar publicly thanked wildfire crews for their dedication, acknowledging the risks they face daily.

Mike Smesman, owner of Bigcat Wildfire, told CBC News, “It was a hard thing to have to go through as a company. It’s never easy when you lose anybody.” He added, “Obviously you can’t put a price tag on anybody’s life. I hope they just ... embrace it and move forward with it and try to be better.”

There are several steps employers can take to protect workers when there is smoke in the air, according to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS). Employers should:

- Monitor the Air Quality Health Index and other indicators of smoke levels.
- Ensure ventilation systems and air filters are maintained to remove smoke particulates, which will help provide clean air to work areas.
- Include wildland fires as a factor in emergency response and business continuity plans if wildland fires are common in the region.
- Implement procedures to monitor and respond to wildland fires and smoke, including the possibility of evacuation.
- Investigate any work-related incidents.
- Provide or call for medical assistance when workers have severe symptoms. Any worker who has difficulty breathing should reduce or stop their activities and notify their supervisor. It may become necessary to temporarily relocate the worker to an area with cleaner air or reschedule the work when the air quality improves.

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Wildfire Safety Tips for Employers

Raising The Standard



RTS CRSP Prep Course

During this 3 day course, we will act as your personal tutor and ensure that your efforts are effective and timely by providing guidance, action plans, training programs and system evaluations. The studying, research and learning can only be done by the participant. However, if you are committed, we can ensure that you will receive your designation.

RTS Due Diligence Training

Due Diligence means taking every reasonable precaution to protect the Health and Safety of workers. Demystify the process of establishing and maintaining a successful Health & Safety System and ensure your organization's compliance with the Due Diligence Legislative Obligations. We have assisted numerous companies in Workwell audits in the last few years. We have a 100% pass rate. You will be in good hands under our direction.

For more information please contact Hailey Mesner at hmesner@rtsconsulting.com

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With Aloha,

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Consultant, President & CEO