

A message to BC employers

April 28 has been designated the national Day of Mourning, a time when we all come together to remember those who have lost their lives due to work-related incidents or occupational diseases. Last year 158 workers died as a result of their work.

Sadly, in a recent three-week period alone, 11 more workers in British Columbia died while at work. These deaths are not isolated to a specific industry or workplace; they happened in construction, forestry, marine, tourism, and transportation — and in locations throughout the province:

March 22	In Burnaby, a worker struck by a falling excavator bucket
March 25	In Penticton, a roofer died as the result of a fall
March 26	In Quesnel, two trucks collided on a highway
March 28	In North Vancouver, a worker fell at a construction site
March 28	In Whistler, a ski guide was buried in an avalanche while guiding a heli-skiing group
March 30	In Vancouver, a worker was found unconscious and later died in hospital
April 2	In Port Alice, a worker at a camp was found deceased at the worksite
April 3	In Golden, a worker for railway company was found deceased in a vacuum truck
April 6	In New Westminster, a worker was struck by vehicle in a freight/container yard
April 9	In Elkford, a worker died when equipment rolled into water
April 9	In Prince Rupert, a worker suffered a suspected cardiovascular event after a fishing boat capsized

While it is too early for us to know the exact circumstances of each of these deaths, we want to remind employers of their responsibility for the health and safety of their workers.

Employers have an obligation to comply with Occupational Health and Safety Regulations and the *Workers Compensation Act* of British Columbia. This means that workers have the right to a safe and healthy workplace. They have the right to be properly trained, and the right to refuse unsafe work. But it's more than a legal obligation. It's the right thing to do. You owe it to your workers to ensure they go home to their families, friends, and loved ones healthy and safe at the end of the day.

We ask all employers to stay focused and to prioritize workplace safety. We also encourage you to honour those who have died by taking part in a Day of Mourning event in your region. For more information about this year's Day of Mourning events, visit dayofmourning.bc.ca. For more information about creating a safe and healthy workplace, visit worksafebc.com.