



Issue Update

Government to Amend Employment Standards Act

The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour today announced the introduction of legislation designed to update the Employment Standards Act. Bill 48, entitled the Employment Standards Amendment Act 2002 is the next step towards meeting this government's "New Era" commitments.

Minister Graham Bruce advises that the proposed amendments will provide workers and employers with greater flexibility by providing them with the opportunity to agree on a work schedule that is not tied to the traditional eight hours per day as long as it maintains an average of 40 hours per week.

According to the Ministry, Bill 48 is expected to simplify rules in several areas, including:

- Reducing the length of time that employers are required to keep detailed employee records.
- Allowing most unionized workplace standards issues to be resolved through the existing collective agreement grievance process, rather than involving the employment standards branch.
- Implementing a shorter minimum daily call-out of two hours' pay, or four hours' pay if the employee was scheduled to work more than eight hours.
- Minimum pay will continue to be based on the employee's regular hourly wage, rather than the provincial minimum wage.

The Bill also increases penalties for those who choose to ignore the law through mandatory fines.

These changes are a result of extensive consultation by government with stakeholders, including BCCA.

Bill 48 can be read in its entirety on the BC Government Website at: www.gov.bc.ca

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