

British Columbia Law Bans Mandatory Heels At Work

Many restaurants across Canada require female restaurant staff to wear high heels, despite how uncomfortable and painful they can be during a long shift.

In response, the government in British Columbia has banned workplace requirements that force women to wear high heels. The *Workers' Compensation Act* was amended to say that employers cannot force workers to wear shoes that inhibit their ability to safely perform their job, or cause them potential harm. Employers have to consider slipping, ankle protection, foot support, muscle or bone injuries, and electrical shock when considering mandatory footwear.

While British Columbia may be the only province that has legislation that specifically prohibits employers from requiring workers to wear high heels, applicable human rights legislation in all provinces already protect against gender-based discrimination, which can include enforcing a dress code based on gender.

We expect that other provinces will follow suit and enact similar legislation protecting workers from being required to wear high heels. In particular, we note that the Alberta Labour Minister, Christina Gray, has already informed news outlets that she has been monitoring the developments in British Columbia and is committed to making similar changes in Alberta.

We recommend companies review their dress codes to ensure compliance with all applicable legislation. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your dress code, please reach out to e2r® to speak with an Advisor.