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Releases

Meagre WCB fine for tragic workplace death involving meat slicer criticized by labour group

Vancouver - Last year, a New Westminster pub worker met a tragic death when he fell on a meat slicer in the pub's kitchen and bled out.

Now, the Workers Compensation Board has found the pub owner responsible for a series of "high risk" safety violations that caused the workplace death of Sanjeev Kainth. But the WCB levied only a meagre fine of $9,450.32.

"It's another slap on the wrist for employers by the WCB," says BC Federation of Labour President Irene Lanzinger. "The small penalty sends the wrong message to employers about their responsibility to keep workers alive, healthy and safe at work," she says.

Where employer negligence causes workplace deaths and serious injuries, Lanzinger says it's time for the WCB to get tough. "We want them to impose real and meaningful penalties on employers who fail to live up to their obligations to keep their workers safe and healthy.

"More broadly, that must include the possibility of jail time for employers whose negligence kills or seriously injures a worker."

Details of the fine levied in the pub tragedy and a summary of the investigation were just made public by the WCB.

In less than 48 hours last week, two workers died tragically on the job, and another was seriously injured in separate incidents across the province.

Earlier in April the WCB took the unprecedented step of calling out employers and reminding them in a special bulletin of their legal obligation to keep employees alive, healthy and safe at work. It was in response to a series of workplace deaths in the weeks leading up to the late April 28 Day of Mourning for workers killed and injured on the job.