

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

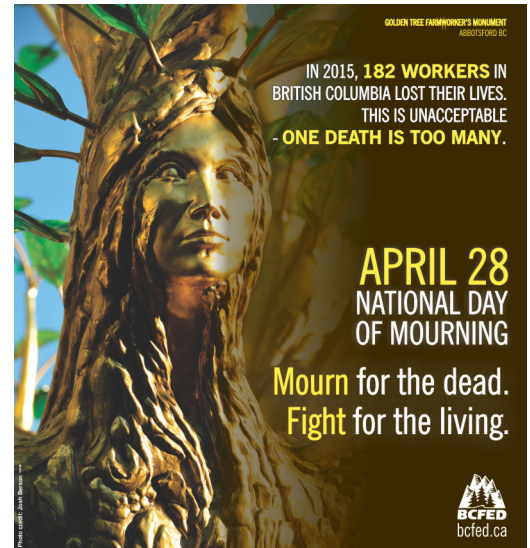
The National Day of Mourning is a solemn day—a day to remember all the workers that have lost their lives or suffered injury or illness because of their work.

It is estimated that more than 2000 workers die each year across Canada – 3 workers each day.

In 2015, 187 workers in British Columbia were reportedly killed – with 122 fatal claims accepted by the Workers’ Compensation Board. Thousands more were physically or mentally injured or suffered occupational disease, including psychological disorders.

Everyone agrees that these deaths, injuries and illnesses are simply unacceptable.

This is why the National Day of Mourning is also a call to action—a day to reflect and renew our collective commitment to strive for healthier and safer workplaces, putting an end to these very preventable tragedies. As well as committing to preserve the dignity of the workers who suffer injury or illness, ensuring full compensation and the return to meaningful, family-supporting work.



A BRIEF HISTORY

The National Day of Mourning has a very proud Canadian labour history.

At the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) convention in 1984, a resolution was submitted by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) National Health and Safety Committee recommending the creation of a remembrance day for workers killed or injured on the job – this resolution was readily adopted by the convention delegates. The date April 28th was chosen as on April 28, 1914 the first comprehensive workers’ compensation act was by the Ontario Legislative Assembly (ON-LA). The CLC officially declared and recognized the National Day of Mourning on April 28, 1985.

In 1988, the ON-LA formally recognized April 28th as the Day of Mourning. By 1991, the Parliament of Canada passed the Workers Mourning Day Act (Canada). The following year, the British Columbia Legislative Assembly also proclaimed April 28th as the Day of Mourning.



Today, the National Day of Mourning is recognized in more than 100 countries around the world.

Across BC, ceremonies and other activities are held in many communities and workplaces. This year, the Day of Mourning BC Schools Project (resources for high schools to encourage a Day of Mourning awareness campaign) will be launched in approximately 120 high schools across BC. This project was a partnership between the BC Labour Heritage Centre, the Workers Compensation Board, the BC Teachers' Federation and the BC Federation of Labour.

RAISING THE PROFILE

It is imperative to increase awareness of preventing occupational health and safety hazards. Continuing to raise the profile of the National Day of Mourning is one key step to accomplish this objective.

The Ontario Legislative Assembly is taking first steps in this direction with a private members Bill 180, *Workers Day of Mourning Act*, which passed 2nd reading on April 7, 2016 with all-party support. If passed, this Bill would formalize recognition of the Day of Mourning in legislation and require flying the flag at half-mast at a number of provincial, public buildings (see list below). The BCFED recommends that British Columbia replicates this initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The BC Federation of Labour recommends that the Government of BC builds on its 1992 Proclamation, by formally recognizing the National Day of Mourning in the provincial legislation.
2. The BC Federation of Labour recommends the Government of BC legislate the requirement to lower BC and Canadian flags to half-mast on April 28th for the following buildings:
 - The BC Parliament Buildings
 - Government of BC buildings
 - Courthouses
 - Buildings occupied by: A Crown agency; a municipality; a local board; a school board; a public or private school, a university, college of applied arts and technology or other post-secondary institution in BC; a hospital; a board of health; a municipal police force; a fire department or ambulance service; and any other person or organization prescribed by regulation.



#200 – 5118 Joyce Street
Vancouver, BC
Canada, V5R 4H1
604.430.1421
bcfed@bcfed.ca

The British Columbia Federation of Labour represents over 500,000 members working in every corner of the province, and in every sector of the economy.

The BCFED has a long and proud history of fighting for the rights of all working people.

The goals of the BCFED are best exemplified by its slogan:
“What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all.”

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