

# DAY OF MOURNING 2021

---

Today marks the Day of Mourning, a day we pause to grieve, to remember and to reflect on fellow workers who have been killed, injured or made ill on the job.

Tragically, 150 Albertans lost their lives as a result of workplace injury or illness last year.

On behalf of the Building Trades of Alberta and its more than 60,000 members from 18 union locals across the province, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the family, friends and coworkers of those who've been killed, injured or made sick as a result of an incident at the jobsite.

The pain of not having a loved one come home, or be forever changed after a day's work, cannot be overstated.

This April 28, we spend the second Day of Mourning gripped in the worst global pandemic seen in generations; a pandemic that's taken millions worldwide, including thousands of workers. The incessant virus has also sickened many more, with the long-term repercussions still largely unknown.

Unfortunately, it's likely COVID-19 will continue to threaten the workplace for the time being, and it's crucial we all remain committed to our fight against it, whether through working from home if you can, masking, improved hand sanitation, physical distancing, rapid antigen testing, lobbying for better protocols, or working with leaders and decision makers to enhance safety measures.

BTA was pleased to see the provincial government take a major step in the fight against COVID-19 recently with an amendment to the Employment Standards Code to allow workers three hours paid leave to get vaccinated against the virus. It was a move pushed through the legislature quickly, which saw bipartisan cooperation put the interest of workers' health and safety first. It was good to see and should have a real impact on protecting more workers.

And, while the pandemic remains a prevailing concern, remember there are many other barriers to workplace health and wellness workers may face every day. So please, watch out for yourself and each other, always stand up for safety, and report any concerns you may have to your job steward immediately.

Finally, I ask that while we mourn our losses today, we also use this time to rededicate ourselves to take action and to push for improved occupational health and safety measures across the province and beyond.

Terry Parker  
Executive Director, Building Trades of Alberta

