

Alberta

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Heat Stress

Aug 1: The Alberta Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) reported that heat stress claims during the summer months steadily increased from 2019 to 2024, peaking during years with significant heat events, including the 2021 Western Canadian heat dome. The industry group with the most claims was Cities/Towns/Villages with 23%; top occupations for heat stress claims: Bus drivers/subway and other transit operators (12%) and Construction trades helpers and labourers (9%).

Action Point: Find out how to implement an effective [Heat Stress Safety & Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

Transportation Safety

Aug 6: Since October, Alberta has issued 443 administrative penalties and eliminated 20 unsafe carriers from provincial roads, 13 of which were "chameleon carriers" trying to evade regulation by changing names, creating new entities, or relocating operations across jurisdictions. Alberta has also inspected 53 of the province's 56 licensed Class 1 driver training schools since April 1, 2025.

New Laws

Aug 26: In response to new U.S. tariffs, Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan) announced a \$20 million federal investment to support modernization of the Mercer Peace River Pulp Mill, which directly employs 360 people and supports approximately 3,000 jobs across Alberta's forest sector supply chain, including through long-standing relationships with local forest sector operators and sawmills.

Action Point: Find out about [how tariffs affect your OHS program](#).

New Laws

Aug 13: Alberta's Investment and Growth Fund is investing more than \$1.5 million to support the expansion of the Whitecourt Newsprint Company Ltd.'s facility. The project will enable the facility to produce multiple grades of paper, resulting in the creation of 13 permanent full-time jobs and 25 temporary construction jobs and the retention of more than 220 existing positions.

New Laws

Aug 12: The federal government announced that it's kicking in another \$2.1 million in funding over the next year for the expansion of the Educational Partnership Foundation's (EPF) Trades Careers program, bringing the total investment in the project to nearly \$5.7 million. The EPF supports young Canadians in Alberta and British Columbia seeking to develop skills, gain valuable work experience, and pursue apprenticeship certification in the Red Seal trades through a Registered Apprenticeship Program.

New Laws

Jul 23: Thanks to the addition of 510 family physicians over the past year, Alberta now has 14,156 fully registered physicians. The overall increase of 1,226 physicians (roughly 10%), as compared to last year at this time, is the largest year-over-year increase in physician numbers on record and an all-time high for Alberta. More than 88% of Albertans now have access to a primary care provider.

New Laws

Aug 24: From now through November 19, Alberta communities and organizations seeking to boost regional economic growth can [apply](#) to the Northern and Regional Economic Development (NRED) program for grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$300,000 per project lasting as long as three years. The program provides up to 50% of total eligible project costs—75% for projects led by Indigenous communities.

Training

Aug 26: Northwestern Polytechnic opened a new Skilled Trades Training Centre in Grande Prairie is expected to support training for more than 4,500 apprentices over the next three years, more than quadruple its current capacity. Built with the help of \$1 million in government aid, the 40,000-square-foot facility offers industry-focused training shops, including new programming to northern Alberta such as welding, refrigeration, and construction.

Industry Challenges

Aug 26: The Governments of Alberta and Canada made strategic changes to AgriStability to help agricultural producers manage business risks from this season's wet conditions. AgriStability supports producers whose income margin falls below 70% of their historical average, covering 80 cents for every dollar of additional decline, up to a maximum payment of \$3 million. Alberta producers can now sign up for the program until October 1; the 2026 interim payment rate was also increased from 50% to 75% of the estimated final payment.

Environmental

Aug 20: Alberta re-established a government task force charged with making recommendations for improving the province's aquatic invasive species (AIS) strategies and priorities. Launched in 2024, the first provincial Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force made seven recommendations to keep Alberta free of invasive mussels, all of which are now being implemented.

Environmental

Aug 26: Alberta confirmed that this fall it will remove *Water Act* approval requirements for routine agricultural activities involving ephemeral water bodies and temporary and seasonal wetlands on private cropland. Under current rules, routine farming activities may trigger regulatory requirements if they affect a temporary or seasonal wetland. In some cases, farmers must hire a qualified wetland professional, complete an assessment, wait for government review, and pay wetland replacement costs before proceeding.

CASES

Due Diligence: Strong Safety Program Leads to Trucker's Acquittal on All 10 OHS Charges

Prosecutors charged a trucking company with 10 OHS violations for an incident in which a 5,000-pound machine shaft rolled off the forks of a telehandler and fell from the upper deck of a trailer killing a worker on the ground. The Alberta court acquitted the employer of all 10 counts. The company's OHS program was comprehensive and compliant with all provisions of the law, the court reasoned, citing its regular safety audits, training programs, and "formal tracking of all key metrics of accidents, injuries, trends in worker behaviour, root causes of injuries, and general accident rates in the industry." The Crown announced that it's appealing the ruling [*R v Stephenson's Rental Services Inc.*, 2026 ABCJ 125 (CanLII), July 31, 2026].

Action Point: *Stephenson's* is an important reminder that OHS laws don't demand perfection but reasonable efforts to comply and that companies who can meet these standards of due diligence won't be held liable for the violations they do commit. Use the [OHSI Due Diligence Scorecard](#) and accompanying Case Summaries to draw other important lessons that you can use to assess whether your own OHS program meets due diligence standards.

Emergency Rescue: Failure to Prevent Fracking Worker's Drowning Death Leads to \$312,000 Fine

A worker collecting a water sample from an open water reservoir used for hydraulic fracturing (fracking) fell into the reservoir and suffered fatal injuries. The victim's employer pled guilty to three OHS offences: failure to: i. implement a system, process, or procedures to ensure that water samples at open water reservoirs were collected safely; ii. develop surface ice water rescue training; and iii. support the procurement of ice water rescue equipment. The result: \$312,000 in penalties [*Birchcliff Energy Ltd.*, [Govt. Press Release](#), August 19, 2026].

Action Point: Find out [how to create an emergency rescue plan](#) for confined spaces work.

Lockout Tagout: Machine Entanglement Results in Serious Injury, \$138,000 OHS Fine

A worker greasing a rotating screen that should have been deenergized got caught between the screen and idler wheel and suffered serious injury. The victim's employer was fined \$138,000 after pleading guilty to failing to ensure that all hazardous energy posing a hazard to the worker was isolated before work began. All other OHS charges were dropped [*InterPro Pipe & Steel Inc., formerly Evraz Inc.*, [Govt. Press Release](#), August 10, 2026].

Action Point: You can prevent OHS fines and injuries like these by implementing a legally sound [Lockout and Hazardous Energy Control Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.

Workplace Harassment: University Has OHS Duty to Protect Employee from Pro-Life Demonstrators

Walking past campus Pro-Life demonstrators and their graphic signs displaying an aborted fetus was an especially harrowing experience for an academic coordinator who suffered a miscarriage on a bathroom floor three months into her pregnancy.

After HR and the faculty association rejected her desperate pleas to stop the demonstrations, she sued the university for not protecting her from workplace harassment. The university claimed that banning the demonstrations would violate demonstrators' free speech rights. Citing their traumatic effect on the coordinator's psychological health, the Alberta arbitrator ruled that tolerating the demonstrators' graphic signs violated the university's OHS duty to protect her from a workplace "hazard." While bound to respect their free speech rights, the university could legally have imposed reasonable limitations to protect the coordinator, such as requiring demonstrators to provide advance notice of demonstrations and keep to one side of the quadrangle. **Result:** The university had to pay the coordinator \$10,000 in damages [[*Mount Royal University v Mount Royal Staff Association*](#), 2026 CanLII 78315 (AB GAA), August 4, 2026].

Action Point: The takeaway is that free speech doesn't give workers (or outsiders) licence to harass another person at the workplace. Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Harassment Compliance Game Plan](#) at your site.