

Northwest Territories

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minimum Wage

Jul 31: The Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) announced that the general minimum wage will increase 25 cents to \$17.20 per hour on September 1. That's tied with Prince Edward Island for fifth highest in Canada. This is the fourth year under the new system basing annual minimum wage increases on the territories' consumer price index.

Action Point: Find out [how to avoid common payroll errors](#) when adjusting to minimum wage increases.

Immigration

Aug 7: The federal government increased Northwest Territories' 2026 allocation for the Nominee Program by 103 nominees, bringing the total allocation for the year to 300 and restoring the territories' allocation to 2024 and 2025 levels. To accommodate the increase, the GNWT added an additional Expression of Interest draw on August 26, 2026.

Action Point: Find out what companies and their HR directors need to know to [navigate the immigration law maze](#).

New Laws

Aug 14: The federal government is \$15 million under the Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to boost safety on Highway 8. The money will be used to replace three aging culverts along this crucial stretch of the Yukon-NWT Dempster Highway corridor.

New Laws

Jul 27: The Governments of Canada and Northwest Territories signed two agreements that will provide over \$655 million to the territories for development of housing and infrastructure. Approximately \$480 million will go to new housing, including at least 380 social housing units, approximately 130 affordable housing units, and 50 transitional or supportive housing units. The GNWT will also get up to \$82.4 million to support infrastructure projects related to housing and post-secondary education over 10 years.

New Laws

Jul 31: From now through August 30, the GNWT will conduct a [survey](#) on how to improve to improve government support, funding, and programming to the business community. Survey data will also help the GNWT gain a better understanding of Northwest Territories trade, business readiness for upcoming

federal government investments, and opportunities for growth.

Workplace Violence

Jul 22: New protections against family violence took effect in Northwest Territories. Highlights: Stalking is now considered a form of family violence banned by the *Protection Against Family Violence Act*, which now covers a broader range of relationships, including intimate personal relationships, family relationships, and care relationships. The Act also includes a new “deemed fear” provision to protect children and other vulnerable people who may be unable to express concerns about their safety.

Action Point: Domestic and family violence becomes an OHS issue and liability risk for employers when it happens at the victim’s workplace. Find out [how to protect your employees](#) from the risk of workplace domestic violence.

Health & Safety

Jul 1: The Workers’ Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC) issued new [guidance](#) to help employers prevent “struck-by” incidents, which happen when workers come into contact with a moving object, tool, or piece of equipment. In 2025, workers’ compensation claims for struck-by injuries in Northwest Territories and Nunavut most often involved construction workers, carpenters, mine workers, maintenance workers, nurses, and people who stock shelves.

Drugs & Alcohol

Jul 22: The GNWT and Nunavut decided not to sign the new Canada-wide agreement allowing for direct-to-consumer (DTC) sales of alcohol products across provincial and territorial boundaries citing “unique realities.” While both territories support the principles of internal free trade, allowing DTC sales would undermine local alcohol restrictions or prohibitions “that reflect community priorities and cultural values.”

Drugs & Alcohol

Aug 10: The GNWT launched a new pilot Quit Card Program to make it easier for residents to quit smoking by providing coverage for prescribed quit smoking medications. The Quit Card is a secure digital voucher accessed directly by pharmacies without need for residents to display an actual card. Residents may be eligible even if they don’t have or have used up their drug coverage. The program will run until March 31, 2028.

CASES

Labour Relations: Labour Arbitrator, Not Court Must Decide Union Employee’s Harassment Claim

A unionized government employee filed a workplace harassment lawsuit against his employer in court. The government agency contended that the claim was essentially a labour dispute over which the court had no jurisdiction. The Northwest Territories court agreed and dismissed the claim. The core of the claim was the employee’s allegation that the employer violated its duty under the collective

agreement to provide a harassment-free workplace. As such, it was a labour dispute that had to be decided by labour arbitration rather than a civil lawsuit [[Acorn v GNWT](#), 2026 NWTSC 41 (CanLII), July 21, 2026].