

Alberta

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

Jun 18: Statistics Canada reports that tourists spent \$14.4 billion in Alberta in 2024, surpassing the previous record high of \$12.8 billion in 2023. At 12%, Alberta's year-over-year tourism growth rate was 4 times above the national average. By comparison, 2024 tourism spending was up 7% in Québec, 2.5% in BC, and down 2.3% in Ontario.

New Laws

Jun 17: Alberta's new Tailings Technology Challenge program will provide \$50 million to support development of new technologies to clean up the water in oil sands tailing ponds and reclaim oil sands processing lands for future use. Oil sands operators responsible for site management and reclamation will be eligible for funding of up to \$15 million per project.

Health & Safety

Jun 13: Alberta is making major changes to its COVID-19 vaccine program in response to new federal procurement rules requiring provinces to pay for their own vaccines. Starting this fall, vaccines will be offered free of charge to high-risk persons through public health clinics only. Community pharmacies will no longer administer COVID-19 vaccines.

Action Point: Find out how to create a legally and clinically sound workplace [exposure control plan](#) to protect your employees against the risk of COVID and other infectious illnesses.

Privacy

Jun 11: New *Protection of Privacy Act* rules and penalties for public bodies took effect in Alberta, including the requirement that agencies develop clear rules for sharing protected personal information with each other when providing common or integrated services to the public.

Drugs & Alcohol

May 16: From now through Sept. 1, Alberta fish and wildlife officers will patrol lakes and rivers in and around Spruce Grove, Wetaskiwin, Ponoka, Camrose, and Red Deer and perform breathalyzer tests on boat operators they have reasonable cause to believe have consumed alcohol. Operators found to be impaired will be arrested and could face criminal charges.

Action Point: Find out how to effectively [control substance abuse](#) at your workplace.

Workers' Comp

Jun 3: The Alberta WCB revised [Policy 03-01](#), Part II, Application 5 (Hearing Loss) to clarify how hearing loss is diagnosed, the different types of hearing loss, including tinnitus, covered by workers' comp, and how the agency decides how each of these

types of hearing loss is compensable.

CASES

Privacy: OK to Use Security Camera Footage to Justify Time Theft Discipline

A union local fired a maintenance worker for time theft based on parking lot security camera footage showing him repeatedly leaving work early without permission. The union grieved, claiming that using security camera footage for disciplinary purposes violated the worker's PIPA privacy rights. While acknowledging that the worker knew about the camera because of the clearly posted warning signs in the parking lot, the union argued that his consent to be filmed was limited to security purposes. That's what the warning signs stated and the local had no written policy governing its use of the footage. But the Alberta arbitrator noted that under PIPA, employers don't need consent to use employees' protected information for an "investigation." Although management first discovered the worker's early exit inadvertently while reviewing the footage for an unrelated matter, it was "reasonable" to continue the inquiry to determine if this was an isolated incident or part of a larger pattern, the arbitrator reasoned. Result: It could use the footage as evidence of just cause to terminate [[CUPE, Local 37 v Unifor Local 191](#), 2025 CanLII 49878 (AB GAA), May 22, 2025].

Action Point: Although it ultimately won the case, the employer might have prevented the dispute altogether by implementing a [video surveillance policy](#) that explained its use of the parking lot security cameras and provided safeguards for employees' privacy. The case also would have gone the other way had it happened in Ontario where the ESA requires employers to have a written [electronic monitoring policy](#).

Labour Relations: Employer Doesn't Need Union's OK to Make Shift Changes

The union claimed that a maintenance services company committed an unfair labour practice when it laid off 3 boilermakers in response to a client's decision to create alternating 7 day on/7 off schedules, a change that the union didn't agree to. The Alberta Labour Relations Board dismissed the claim. The court found the decision reasonable and nixed the union's appeal, noting that the shift changes and layoffs happened in early 2020 when COVID was ravaging every industry in Canada and the terms of the recently expired but not yet replaced collective agreement were still in effect, including the employer's right to control crew sizes and lay off employees [[International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers & Helpers, Local Lodge 146 v Melloy Industrial Services Inc.](#), 2025 ABKB 334 (CanLII), June 2, 2025].

Employment Contract: Verbal Agreement to Settle Discrimination Claim Is Legally Binding

An employee verbally agreed to settle his disability discrimination claim for \$2,000. But when a lawyer told him \$2,000 was too low, he changed his mind and refused to sign the release agreement and release. The employer claimed that the verbal agreement was enforceable and binding. The Alberta Human Rights Tribunal agreed and refused to let the employee take his claim to a hearing. The employer made a

settlement offer that the employee specifically accepted. That was enough to form a contract, even though the final wording hadn't yet been agreed to. There was nothing wrong with talking to a lawyer. But the point of that consultation should have been to ensure the written agreement reflected the verbal agreement not to re-open the negotiations. It's not in the public interest to invalidate negotiated settlement agreements just because one of the parties experiences "settlement remorse" [*Complainant v Respondent*, 2025 AHRC 60 (CanLII), May 30, 2025].

Action Point: Be sure to advise employees to consult their lawyers before they sign a release. Use the [HRI template](#) to draft an enforceable severance release agreement.