



## **LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **New Laws**

Sep 16: Alberta says it will give oil and gas, oil sands mining, electricity, forestry, chemicals, fertilizers, minerals, food processing, waste, and other TIER system industries the option of investing in on-site emissions reduction technology to comply with their emission reductions requirements. Options available under current rules include paying into the TIER fund or buying credits. supports local jobs and reduces emissions. The new rules would also allow smaller facilities that currently participate in the TIER system to leave or opt out for 2025 to reduce costs and red tape.

### **New Laws**

Sep 16: Alberta's 2025 budget allocates \$185 million in improvements for WorkFirst Alberta services to make it easier for job seekers to get the training, reskilling, consultation, and support necessary to find jobs while enhancing the ability of employers to find and retain talent.

### **New Laws**

Sep 5: Alberta launched a new [Labour Market Information online portal](#) offering data to help students, jobseekers, workers, employers, and policymakers understand what jobs are in demand, how industries are changing and what skills are needed in today's workforce.

**Action Point:** Find out what you can do [to help employees searching for jobs](#) make more effective use of social media.

### **Training**

Sep 10: Alberta will contribute nearly \$11 million to the construction of a 126,000-square-foot aviation training facility to be located at YYC in Calgary. The new Alberta Training Centre of Excellence for Aviation and Aerospace will offer training to Mount Royal University students with an expected 6,000 graduates per year. Other partners in the venture include WestJet and CAE.

### **Employment Benefits**

Sep 10: According to the government's new report, there were 578 registered pension plans representing 1.0 million members in Alberta as of December 31, 2024, as opposed to 569 plans and 984,402 members at the end of 2023. Eight of Canada's top 100 pension plans were registered in Alberta, including the eighth-largest plan. Defined Contribution Only was, by far, the most common plan type at 417, followed by Single Employer/Other (129), Collectively Bargained (20) and Jointly Governed (3).

## CASES

### **Workplace Harassment: High Court Nixes Constitutional Challenge of OHS Harassment Ban**

Responding to significant criticism from faculty and students, the University of Lethbridge canceled a guest lecture by a controversial speaker on how “woke-ism” threatens academic freedom. The speaker and a would-be attendee sued the University for violating their free speech rights. The University argued that it had to cancel the event to comply with its OHS duties to protect workers and students from workplace violence and harassment. The plaintiffs then revised their complaint to add a claim contesting listing “psychological” and social” hazards in the *OHS Act* definition of “harassment.” The lower court refused to allow the OHS claim and the Alberta Court of Appeal upheld the ruling. According to the high court, the judge didn’t make an obvious legal error in finding that the OHS claim was irrelevant and fundamentally altered the case, which was really about the reasonableness of the University’s decision to cancel the event [[Pickle v University of Lethbridge](#), 2025 ABCA 318 (CanLII), September 23, 2025].

**Action Point:** Although they lost on the OHS constitutionality front, the plaintiffs in this case might still prevail by showing that the University’s decision to cancel the event was unreasonable. Find out more about the [laws governing free speech and political speech](#) in the workplace.

### **Drugs & Alcohol: Terminating Female for Leaving Testing Facility May Be Sex Discrimination**

A company ordered a payroll administrator who had been working from home to begin working at the office. During the pre-access drug and alcohol testing required to return to the safety-sensitive site, the administrator was asked to produce 125 milliliters of urine but couldn’t deliver the necessary quantity. The drug testing facility asked her to stay at least 3 hours to produce the sample in installments, but the administrator said she couldn’t because she had to go to a training session. So, the company fired her for leaving the facility without authorization. The administrator sued for sex discrimination, claiming that being female made it impossible for her to produce such a large sample. The Director pooh-pooed the argument, reasoning that the administrator’s sex in no way factored into the company’s decision to terminate. Normally, the Director’s rejection is the kiss of death for a discrimination complaint. But the Alberta Human Rights Commission deviated from the script by finding that the administrator might be able to make out a claim by showing that the training session she had to leave the facility to attend was actually mandatory. **Result:** The case had to go back down for a hearing [[Complainant v Fort McKay Group of Companies Ltd.](#), 2025 AHRC 93 (CanLII), September 5, 2026].

**Action Point:** Find out [how to create a legally sound drug testing policy](#) at your workplace.

### **Workplace Violence: Punching Coworker in Face Is Grounds to Terminate Even for First Offence**

A miner got fired for punching a coworker who insulted him in the face. The union claimed that termination for what amounted to a spur of the moment, isolated

incident was too harsh a penalty given the worker's 14 years of service and clean disciplinary record. But the Alberta arbitrator disagreed and rejected the grievance. Workplace violence is a serious offence for which termination may be justified even if it's just a first offence committed in response to provocation. Insults at work happen all the time and workers must work through their conflict with coworkers without engaging in violence. This is especially true at a safety-sensitive workplace like a mine. In addition, the worker's unwillingness to accept responsibility for his misconduct increased the risk of its happening again [[Suncor Energy Inc. v Unifor Local 707-A](#), 2025 CanLII 74911 (AB GAA), July 14, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [Workplace Violence Prevention Game Plan](#) at your site.