

# Month In Review – Alberta



## LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### OHS Enforcement

Jan 1: Based on its 2025-2026 Review Plan, Alberta *OHS Code* review in the coming year will focus on Part 36: Mining, Part 40: Utility Workers – Electrical, Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL) review, and approach to referencing technical standards.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement an [OHS inspections policy](#) in case inspectors show up at your door.

### WHMIS

Dec 2: Alberta issued updated *WHMIS guidance* incorporating the GHS 7 changes contained in the revised national *Hazardous Products Regulations* on which WHMIS is based that went into full force on January 1, 2026, including changes to certain classifications and hazard information that must be listed in Sections 9 and 14 of the Safety Data Sheet.

**Action Point:** Find out more about the [new GHS 7 SDS rules and how to comply with them](#).

### Transportation Safety

Dec 16: Over two-thirds (68%) of the 59,400 respondents to Alberta's recent online survey support the proposal to

increase speed limits on rural divided highways from 110 km/h to 120 km/h. The government is planning a “mini-trial” assessing the impact of higher divided highway speed limits on safety and driving behaviour. Meanwhile, over 90% of respondents support restricting commercial trucks from certain lanes on major highways.

## First Aid

Jan 2: Alberta published the [revised list](#) of approved first aid training agencies and courses for purposes of compliance with OHS first aid requirements for the 3-month period from January 1 to March 31, 2026.

**Action Point:** Find out how to implement an effective [First Aid Compliance Game Plan](#) at your workplace.

## Occupational Injury

Jan 1: Effective today, the maximum duration of long-term illness and injury leave under the *Employment Standards Code* increases from 16 to 27 weeks per calendar year. The [change](#) brings Alberta into line with long-term illness entitlements in most of Canada, including Ontario, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan.

## New Laws

Dec 11: A newly passed government finance and tax bill ([Bill 12](#)) imposes a levy of up to 2% on data centre computer hardware on data centres of 75 megawatts or greater, which would be deductible from corporate income taxes paid in Alberta.

## New Laws

Dec 11: Royal Assent for [Bill 13](#) imposing new limits on professional regulatory bodies for disciplining professionals

for engaging in “expressive off-duty conduct,” except in cases of threats of physical violence, criminal conviction or other circumstances. The *Regulated Professions Neutrality Act* also restricts mandatory training unrelated to competence or ethics, such as diversity, equity and inclusion training while requiring regulatory bodies to establish principles banning the assignment of value, blame or differential treatment to individuals based on their personally held views or political beliefs.

## Workplace Violence

Dec 16: Alberta launched a new Family Violence Court Liaison 10-year pilot program to help make it easier, cheaper and less stressful for victims of domestic violence to get help and navigate the court system.

**Action Point:** Domestic and sexual violence becomes an OHS compliance issue when it happens at the victim's workplace. That makes it imperative to incorporate domestic violence protections into your workplace violence prevention plan. Find out how to implement an effective [Workplace Domestic Violence Prevention Plan](#) to protect your own workers.

## Workers' Compensation

Jan 1: The Alberta WCB 2026 cost of living adjustment amount is 1.64%. The claims cost threshold increases \$100 to \$2,100 and Maximum Assessable Earnings rises from \$106,400 to \$110,900. The Maximum Monthly Permanent Total Disability Rate is \$6,140.50 and the Minimum Monthly PTD Rate is \$2,176.85.

**Action Point:** Find out how much each province and territory is charging for [workers' compensation premiums in 2026](#).

## Workers' Compensation

Feb 28: February 28<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for Alberta employers to

submit their actual payroll and wages data from 2024 and projected figures for 2026 to the WCB. Missing the deadline may result in penalties and late fees.

## Environmental

Dec 11: [Bill 7](#), the *Water Amendment Act*, to streamline regulatory requirements governing access to water, received Royal Assent and will take effect upon proclamation. The legislation is designed to cut red tape to make water more easily available to farmers, ranchers, communities and businesses without diluting environmental water protections.

## CASES

### **Hot Work: Oil Field Welding Accident Results in \$216,000 in Fines Against 3 Defendants**

An oil and gas site worker using a torch to cut a wellhead casing for removal as part of a well abandonment process suffered serious injury after being struck by the wellhead after it dislodged. Three defendants were collectively fined \$216,000, including \$116,000 against the prime contractor for failing to ensure employers at the site were informed of its hazards, \$75,000 against the victim's employer for failing to notify workers of those hazards and \$25,000 against a supervisor for failing to protect a worker under his charge [*Canlin Resources Partnership, Ulysses Engineering Inc. and Matthew Morris, Govt. News Release*, December 16, 2025].

**Action Point:** Don't let this happen to you! Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [Hot Work and Welding Compliance Game Plan at](#) your workplace.

## **PPE: Duty to Pay for Safety Equipment Doesn't Cover Fitness for Work Forms**

While acknowledging its right to make injured workers complete a Fitness For Work (FFW) form to return to work, the union insisted that the employer also had to reimburse them up to \$25 for the costs of completing the forms in accordance with the part of the collective agreement obligating the employer to supply required “safety equipment” at its own expense. But the Alberta arbitrator didn’t buy it. An FFW form isn’t a piece of safety equipment like PPE or protective clothing. Its purpose is not ensure workplace safety but to help employers meet their duty to provide reasonable accommodations for injured workers. And since there was no express language in the collective agreement requiring the employer to pay workers’ costs in filling out the FFW form, the grievance was a non-starter [[\*Alberta Union of Provincial Employees v Chartwell Master Care LP \(Emerald Hills Retirement Residence\)\*](#), 2025 CanLII 133708 (AB GAA), December 22, 2025].

**Action Point:** Find out about the [rules governing whether employers must pay for the PPE](#) that OHS laws require workers to use.

## **Drugs & Alcohol: Firing Employee for Alcohol-Induced Violence Is Failure to Accommodate**

Violent behaviour and threatening coworkers would normally be just cause for termination, especially at a small family-run business. The problem was that the Managing Partner who got fired might have behaved the way he did because of his drinking problems. The company was well aware of his alcohol issues but made no effort to determine his need for reasonable accommodations. The evidence suggested that the company ignored medical information and rejected the Partner’s request

for time away to pursue treatment. Result: The Alberta Human Rights Commission ordered the company to pay him damages for disability discrimination [[Andrusiw v Westcon Precast Inc.](#), 2025 AHRC 128 (CanLII), December 5, 2025].

**Action Point:** The moral of this case is that alcohol and drug addictions are disabilities for which employers must make “reasonable accommodations” under anti-discrimination laws. Find out how to use the [OHS Insider Substance Abuse Compliance Game Plan](#) to curb drugs and alcohol at your workplace without violating workers’ rights to reasonable accommodations.

# 2026

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