

Monthly Compliance Briefing for HR Directors of Alberta Companies



Free trade, violence in the workplace, and employee telecommuting rights were among the key themes in November on the employment law front. Here's a quick briefing of the important regulatory developments that HR directors in Alberta need to be aware of.

Free Trade & Labour Mobility

All 14 of Canada's governments, including Alberta, signed a new Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement (CMRA) that comes into force in December, harmonizing compliance requirements for thousands of goods across the country—excluding food—and reducing barriers to interprovincial business.

Like most provinces, Alberta has enacted new free trade legislation allowing for the free movement of intra-provincial goods and services and recognition of out-of-province professional certifications and accreditations of workers from jurisdictions with reciprocal legislation, making it easier for them to ply their trade in Alberta.

Complementing this, the Alberta Assembly tabled Bill 10, which would prohibit regulators from requiring Canadian work experience as a prerequisite for entering regulated professions—unless justified for health and safety reasons.

Other Employment Law Developments

Alberta expanded access to skills training with the Canada-Alberta Productivity Grant, which covers 50% of employer training costs—and up to 75% for unemployed trainees—representing a substantial opportunity to support workforce development. At the same time, the province issued a warning about a rise in fraudulent safety-training certificates, which should prompt HR and OHS directors to strengthen their training verification processes.

Equity-related initiatives also remain top of mind, with Dec. 19 marking the deadline for organizations seeking Ethnocultural Grants (up to \$50,000) and Anti-Racism Grants (up to \$10,000).

Health and safety issues continue to generate concern. Alberta reported 922 ladder-related injuries and nearly \$10 million in claim costs between 2019 and 2023,

underscoring the need for focused prevention efforts. Meanwhile, new amendments proposed in Bill 4 would expand the authority of the Integrated Threat and Risk Assessment Centre (ITRAC), enabling access to police databases as part of domestic-violence-related threat assessments.

Key Employment Law Cases

In a key decision addressing one of the hottest issues in HR litigation right now—telecommuting rights—an arbitrator found that Alberta Health Services did not discriminate when only 10 of 35 temporary remote-work incumbents qualified for new permanent roles. Evidence showed that the higher experience requirement was a valid bona fide occupational requirement (BFOR) and that training all 25 unsuccessful candidates would constitute undue hardship.

Meanwhile, the OHS Appeals Tribunal reinstated a reprisal claim against the Calgary Board of Education after an employee who reported harassment saw her workspace, duties, and email access restricted—raising concerns that such measures may be perceived as punishment unless carefully justified.

Action Points for Alberta HR Directors

- Review hiring, promotion, and credentialing requirements for citizenship or Canadian-experience criteria, and [eliminate practices that may lead to unintended discrimination](#)
- Consider applying for Canada-Alberta Productivity Grant funding to reduce training costs for employees.
- Implement or strengthen systems to verify the authenticity of safety-training certificates required by OHS laws.
- Implement a [legally sound telecommuting policy](#) at your workplace to ensure control over remote work arrangements.
- Review your workplace violence prevention program and ensure it accounts for [risks of domestic violence in the workplace](#).