

ccdi.ca



Northwest Territories provincial legislation guide

July 2026



Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

Contents

Introduction 3

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act 4

Employment Standards Act 5

Northwest Territories Human Rights Act..... 6

Safety Act and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 7

Workers' Compensation Act 8

Introduction

This guide provides a brief overview of key employment, health and safety, privacy, and diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) legislation in the Northwest Territories. For each piece of legislation, we outline why it is important to employers and how it relates to DEIA, who and what it applies to, the latest date of amendment, the key requirements for employers (highlighting how the legislation specifically affects workplace practices), and the penalties for non-compliance. This guide is intended for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

We encourage organizations to use this guide as a starting point for understanding their obligations under the law. However, this guide is not exhaustive and there are details, exceptions, and nuances in the legislation that require further reading or consultation to fully understand and apply. Additionally, while the information and links provided are accurate at the time of publication, this guide is not updated with every legislative change. Users should review the relevant legislation to confirm current requirements.

While compliance with the law is the baseline, we also recommend that organizations go beyond compliance where possible, proactively building workplaces that prioritize safety, inclusion, and equity in policies, practices, and culture.

Note that this resource covers legislation specific to one province or territory. A Canadian federal legislation guide is also available.

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Why this legislation matters

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA) helps ensure transparency, accountability, and privacy protection within public-sector organizations. The Act balances the public's right to know how government operates with the need to safeguard sensitive and personal information.

Applies to

- Public bodies in the Northwest Territories, including government departments, territorial agencies, boards, commissions, and corporations, and certain health and public service bodies.

Latest amendment

- 2023-03-30

Requirements for employers

- Collect, use, and disclose personal information only as authorized by the Act, and only for purposes that are reasonable and necessary.
- Maintain reasonable security safeguards and confidentiality practices.
- Respond to access requests within legislated timelines and allow individuals to request corrections to their personal information.
- Retain and manage records appropriately.
- Cooperate with reviews or investigations conducted by the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Investigations or reviews by the Information and Privacy Commissioner that may result in orders requiring corrective action or compliance measures, reputational damage, and legal consequences.
- Unauthorized disclosure, destruction, concealment, or mishandling of records or personal information may lead to fines up to \$10,000.

Further reading

- [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy](#), Government of Northwest Territories

Employment Standards Act

Why this legislation matters

The Employment Standards Act establishes minimum workplace standards for key employment conditions. These standards help create consistency across workplaces and protect employees from unfair or unsafe labour practices.

Applies to

- Most employees and employers in the Northwest Territories including full-time, part-time, temporary, and casual workers.

Latest amendment

- 2024-11-01

Requirements for employers

- The Employment Standards Act establishes minimum standards for key employment conditions, such as:
 - Minimum wage and pay practices
 - Hours of work and overtime
 - Vacation, general holidays, and job-protected leaves of absence
 - Termination notice and pay
- Employers are also prohibited from retaliating against employees who exercise their rights under the Act or participate in investigations.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Enforcement usually starts with education and correction, and Employment Standards can order employers to pay owed wages and correct violations.
- Employers may face administrative penalties for failing to comply (up to \$100,000 for corporations and up to \$50,000, or prison time, for individuals), especially for repeated or serious violations.
- Failure to comply with court orders can result in fines of up to \$250 per day.

Further reading

- [Employment Standards Act](#)
- [Employment Standards](#), Government of Northwest Territories

Northwest Territories Human Rights Act

Why this legislation matters

The Human Rights Act protects individuals from discrimination and harassment in areas like employment, housing, services, and education. The Act helps promote equal opportunity, dignity, and inclusion by ensuring individuals are treated fairly regardless of personal characteristics protected under the legislation.

Applies to

- Employers, employees, service providers, landlords, unions, and other organizations operating within the Northwest Territories.

Latest amendment

- 2022-03-31

Requirements for employers

- Prohibit and prevent discrimination and harassment in employment.
- Provide reasonable accommodations for needs related to disability, religion, or other protected grounds, to the point of undue hardship.
- Investigate and address complaints of discrimination or harassment appropriately and promptly.
- Review workplace policies and practices to identify and remove barriers that may disadvantage protected groups.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Individuals can file a complaint with the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission, which may investigate and attempt mediation or settlement. If unresolved, the matter may be referred to an adjudication panel.
- The adjudicator can issue orders to stop discriminatory practices and implement new policies or training, or remedies like compensation for lost wages or payment of damages.

Further reading

- [Human Rights Act](#)
- [Employers & Employees](#), Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission

Safety Act and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

Why this legislation matters

The Safety Act and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations establish the legal framework for workplace health and safety in the territory. Together, they are intended to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.

Applies to

- Almost all employers and employees operating in the Northwest Territories, including supervisors, contractors and subcontractors, and self-employed workers.

Latest amendment

- 2023-11-01

Requirements for employers

- Provide and maintain safe systems of work and work environments.
- Provide and maintain personal protective equipment (PPE) by ensuring appropriate PPE is available, properly maintained, and used when required.
- Provide necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision.
- Prevent and address workplace violence and harassment.
- Respect worker rights, including the right to know about workplace hazards, participate in workplace safety activities, and refuse unsafe work.
- Establish joint health and safety committees or worker representatives where required.
- Maintain records and cooperate with OHS officers and inspections.

Penalties for non-compliance

- Employers may face inspections, investigations, compliance orders, stop-work orders, or prosecution and fines up to \$500,000.
- Workers who participate in an offence under the Act may be subject to fines up to \$50,000 for those directly involved, or \$25,000 for those who condone the offence, along with possible jail time.

Further reading

- [Safety Act](#) and [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations](#)
- [OHS Information](#), Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Workers' Compensation Act

Why this legislation matters

The Workers' Compensation Act establishes the workers' compensation system, which provides no-fault insurance coverage for workplace injuries and illnesses. The Act ensures all workers have equal access to injury benefits, rehabilitation, and return-to-work support.

Applies to

- Most employers and workers in the Northwest Territories, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and casual employees, and many contractors and subcontractors.
- The Act is administered by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC), which operates in both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Latest amendment

- 2023-03-30

Requirements for employers

- Register with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC).
- Report workplace injuries, occupational illnesses, fatalities, and dangerous occurrences to the WSCC within the required time frame and cooperate in claim investigations.
- Pay premiums based on their payroll and industry classification.
- Cooperate in rehabilitation and return-to-work planning, including considering modified duties or accommodations when appropriate.
- Refrain from retaliating against workers for reporting injuries, filing claims, or exercising their rights under the legislation.

Penalties for non-compliance

- The WSCC may issue compliance orders, conduct investigations or audits, and take enforcement action against employers who fail to meet their obligations.
- Offences under the Act may lead to prosecution and fines (up to \$50,000 for individuals and \$500,000 for corporations) and possible jail time.

Further reading

- [Workers' Compensation Act](#)
- [Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission \(WSCC\)](#)