

Supporting Alberta's construction sector

Reducing red tape means faster approvals and more cost savings for job creators in the construction industry.

Updating lien requirements

New, prompt payment rules under the *Builders' Lien Act* mean builders in the construction industry see fewer payment delays. These changes make it easier for builders to determine which payment rules apply to their projects and align with payment rules in other provinces.

Aligning Alberta's contract payment rules more closely with other provinces also makes it easier for businesses that operate or wish to move across provincial borders. Key changes include:

- setting a 28-day timeline for project owners to pay invoices to general contractors;
- setting a seven-day timeline for contractors to pay subcontractors after receiving payment;
- extending timelines for registering liens:
 - construction industry: from 45 days to 60 days
 - concrete industry: from 45 days to 90 days;
- increasing the minimum amount owed that can be subject to a lien from \$300 to \$700;
- introducing new rules allowing holdback money on large, multi-year projects to be released without risks at pre-set times; and
- improving subcontractors' access to payment information.

Further changes also allow dispute resolution to occur through an adjudication body, and for subsequent decisions to be "interim and binding," meaning more businesses will be able to avoid the courts, saving associated time and costs.

Streamlining condo development

The *New Home Buyer Protection Act* removed the requirement for builders to complete a Building Assessment Report (BAR) for newly constructed condominiums, saving builders and homeowners \$2.7 million per year in costs.

Because they duplicated protections already present in the *Safety Codes Act* and the *Condominium Properties Act*, BARs provided little value to condominium boards and owners. Eliminating these reports saves costs associated with reporting on condominium development and construction, and reduces overall construction costs for developers. This, in turn, lowers costs to new condo buyers.

Reforming OH&S

The *Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act, 2020* simplified language in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and removed unnecessary barriers for job creators while protecting workers' safety, rights or protections by:

- providing more flexible requirements for health and safety committees and representatives, allowing employers to tailor the committees in ways that better fit their worksites;
- reversing costly changes made to the workers' compensation system in 2018 to ensure the long-term viability of the program; and
- introducing new liability protections for volunteers who are acting in good faith within their scope of duties.





Municipal Government Act updates

Residential developers can move their projects forward more easily, stimulate investment and create jobs in the construction industry thanks to changes to the *Municipal Government Act*, including:

- creating the ability for the Minister of Municipal Affairs to set firm timelines for subdivision and development in larger municipalities where necessary to prevent delays and ensure residential construction projects are completed on time;
- removing the ability of municipalities to take additional reserve land beyond the standard amount, creating greater certainty for developers; and
- improving transparency by requiring municipalities to publish the information used in the calculation of off-site levies (fees paid by developers to help cover the cost of necessary infrastructure outside the project site).

MyWCB app

The Workers' Compensation Board launched the new MyWCB employer app to help businesses verify the balance of their accounts, make payments, update payroll, and change to a monthly payment installment plan by signing up for pre-authorized debit.

Employers have made more than 3,100 WCB payments to-date through the MyWCB employer app, saving them a trip to the bank so they can focus their time on growing their business.

Land and Property Rights Tribunal

Albertans now only have to deal with one tribunal for land and property rights, instead of four. Combining four boards (Municipal Government Board, New Home Buyer Protection Board, Land Compensation Board, Surface Rights Board) into one single public agency – the Land and Property Rights Tribunal – saves Albertans time and administrative steps.

- Consolidating the four boards has also resulted in more flexibility for the Tribunal, which will be able to allocate its resources (such as panel members and support staff) to address surges in applications, ensuring Albertan's concerns are heard and addressed as quickly as possible.

Wood building construction

Changes to the *Safety Codes Act* now allow for construction of wood buildings up to 12 storeys tall. This means Alberta builders can construct mass-timber buildings up to 12 storeys at least two construction seasons sooner than they would under the automatic code adoption process for updated national code provisions.

The Alberta Forest Products Association estimates this change has the potential to create about 60 jobs per construction site and up to 400 jobs per new sawmill and production site.

Owner-building authorizations

A streamlined authorization process saves Alberta homebuilders time and frustration when applying for owner-building authorizations (OBA). Previously, they faced onerous up-front requirements that created long turnaround times for applications and delays in construction. Alberta eliminated the unnecessary and redundant steps in this process, and streamlined procedures to allow the review and approval of straightforward applications through a simplified process.

Processing time for OBAs has also been reduced from 17 to 11 days, allowing Albertans building their own homes to begin construction sooner.



Speeding up project approvals

To ensure the protection of Indigenous traditional use sites, historic buildings, and archaeological and paleontological sites, all major industrial projects in Alberta – from construction to oil sands operations – are required to complete a Historic Resources Impact Assessment (HRIA).

The new approach assesses historic resource concerns for the entire project upfront, while still ensuring the protection of historical resources without requiring redundant approvals, allowing developers to start construction sooner and get Albertans back to work. Previously, developers of large and complex industrial projects were required to submit separate HRIA applications for each individual development component within their project.

There were 214,000 people employed in the industry in 2020, of whom 92.4% were full-time and 7.6% were part-time.

Let's keep going

Alberta's government will continue working with industry panels and Albertans to identify regulatory barriers that may be hindering economic recovery and growth. Visit [Alberta.ca/CutRedTape](https://alberta.ca/CutRedTape) to learn more about Alberta's red tape reduction progress to date.