

Alberta Pilot for Occupation-Specific Work Permits

Overview

Launched on June 1, 2011 and part of the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program, the “Alberta Pilot for Occupation-Specific Work Permits” (Alberta Pilot) allows workers in specific occupations to work temporarily in specific occupations without an LMO.¹

Originally, the Alberta Pilot was for the steamfitter/pipefitter occupation, but was expanded in September 2012 to include additional occupations. The Alberta Pilot presently pertains to the following occupations:

- Steamfitter/pipefitter (NOC 7252)
- Welder (NOC 7265)
- Heavy-duty mechanic (NOC 7312, 7321)
- Ironworker (NOC 7264)
- Millwright and industrial mechanic (NOC 7311)
- Carpenter (NOC 7311)
- Estimator (NOC 2234)

The Pilot was cancelled in June 2014 after Minister Kenney found “a couple of major multinational construction companies had hired dodgy labour recruiters to bring forward applications for these skilled trade positions that were LMO exempt for people that didn’t speak English and were clearly not qualified in applications that were filled with misrepresentation.”²

Process

Uncertified guest workers (i.e. do not hold an Alberta Qualification Certificate or a trade certificate recognized in the Province of Alberta at the journey person level), must have a job offer and an approval letter from Alberta Apprenticeship and Training (AAIT) for the “Alberta Qualification Certificate Program.” There is a one-year period to allow the guest worker to meet AAIT certification requirements. If they do so, their work permit was extended from one-year to two.

The AFL estimates that only 24 per cent of permits given under the Pilot were for fully qualified workers.

Entrance into the AAIT’s Alberta Qualification Certificate Program was – and still is - based solely on the number of hours and months of hands-on experience the guest worker has and supposedly verified by an employer, whether foreign or domestic.

Certified guest workers were given a two-year work permit under the Pilot.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the guest worker is able to perform the work offered, but in the case of the Alberta Pilot, it does so largely on the recommendation of the government of Alberta.³

Unifor445/cope458 File: G:\Communications\NEWS\AFL\2014\Backgrounder_Alberta Pilot for Occupation-Specific Work Permits_2014Sep4.doc

¹Citizenship and Immigration Canada, “Operational Bulletin 279-D (revised) – September 27, 2012: Alberta Pilot for Occupation-Specific Work Permits – Expanded to include 6 (six) additional occupations,” <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2012/ob279D.asp>

²Hon. Minister Jason Kenney (Employment and Social Development Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, news conference, June 20, 2014, National Press Theatre

³Citizenship and Immigration Canada, “Operational Bulletin 434 – July 9, 2012: Clarifying the responsibilities of Service Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency in regard to assessing a Temporary Foreign Worker’s eligibility to work in Alberta in a compulsory certification trade position,” July 9, 2012, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/bulletins/2012/ob434.asp>