

Labour Mobility

Questions and Answers

Agreement on Internal Trade and TILMA

- 1 **Question:** What is TILMA? What is the Agreement on Internal Trade?

TILMA stands for *Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement*. It was signed by the governments of Alberta and British Columbia in 2006.

The *Agreement on Internal Trade* (often referred to as AIT) is an agreement signed by the federal, provincial and territorial governments in 1994.

- 2 **Question:** What do they do?

The agreements are intended to remove barriers and make the movement of goods, services, investment and workers between provinces and territories easier.

- 3 **Question:** When do they come into effect?

The TILMA came into effect on April 1, 2007 and will be fully implemented on April 1, 2009, following the conclusion of the two-year transition period.

The *Agreement on Internal Trade* came into effect on July 1, 1995. A revised Chapter 7, which deals with labour mobility, comes into effect on April 1, 2009.

Alberta has recognized most trade certificates with and without a Red Seal endorsement from other jurisdictions since February 2009.

- 4 **Question:** How is labour mobility improved?

Labour mobility is improved as certified or licensed workers from all provinces and territories have their certificates or licenses in their trade, occupation or profession recognized by all other provinces and territories without having to take significant additional training or examinations.

In the regulated trades, this includes certificates with and without a Red Seal endorsement issued under the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program.

- 5 **Question:** Why would anyone bother to get the Red Seal if it is not required to work in another province or territory?

The Red Seal endorsement is widely recognized and respected by industry as a standard of excellence. In certain work environments, it may provide a competitive hiring advantage. Some employers may require workers to have a Red Seal endorsement before they hire them.

- 6 **Question:** Which Alberta trades are affected?

Both agreements affect all designated trades and designated occupations. However, they will have the greatest impact on Alberta's [compulsory certification trades](#). Alberta now recognizes certificates from other jurisdictions that do not have a Red Seal endorsement.

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7 Question: Which certificates are recognized?

All certificates in a designated trade or occupation issued by a regulatory authority in Canada are recognized in Alberta. This includes certificates in Red Seal trades that do not have a Red Seal endorsement. As well, the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board has recognized other certificates, such as QL5 certificates issued by the Department of National Defence (Canada) and the Canadian Elevator Industry Education Program (CEIEP).

8 Question: How will we know which certificates are recognized in Alberta?

The Red Seal endorsement is well recognized by Alberta employers. Recognized certificates will be posted on www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca (go to <http://www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca/certificates>). However, not every recognized certificate is posted. If you are unable to determine whether or not a certificate is recognized, contact your local [apprenticeship and industry training office](#).

Employers who have questions about the authenticity of a certificate should contact the province that issued the certificate. See [Tips for Alberta employers](#).

9 Question: What is a regulatory authority? Who decides?

“Regulatory authority” is a government department, ministry or similar agency as well as a non-governmental body that has been delegated by law that establishes occupational standards or requirements for certification, assesses the qualifications of workers, or issues official recognition that a person meets the occupational standards or requirements for certification. “Regulatory authority” is defined in both agreements.

In most cases, the regulatory authority for the trades is the same authority that issues the Red Seal endorsement.

10 Question: Will any Canadian certificates not be recognized in Alberta?

Alberta does not recognize certificates in trades and occupations for which Alberta does not issue a certificate. For example: British Columbia issues a certificate for asphalt paving/laydown technician. Alberta does not issue a certificate in this occupation and does not recognize the British Columbia certificate.

11 Question: How do these agreements affect the Red Seal Program?

The Red Seal endorsement is a recognized standard in jurisdictions across Canada, one that employers look for as an indication of skills and competency. It will continue to be recognized. Alberta and all the other provinces and territories will continue to support the Red Seal Program.

Both agreements specifically mention the Red Seal Program and require the parties to the agreements to recognize a worker who holds a certificate bearing the Red Seal endorsement as qualified to practice that trade.

Chapter 7 contains a commitment of the jurisdictions to the Red Seal Program, including the use of the National Occupational Analyses as a well-accepted means of establishing common interprovincial standards for the trades. In fact, it points to the Red Seal Program as a model of the kind of interprovincial standards that jurisdictions should strive to adopt for other occupations.

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12 Question: Are employers allowed to tell tradespeople that they will not hire them without a Red Seal?

Yes. Neither agreement directs which qualifications an employer must accept. The agreements remove barriers imposed by provincial and territorial jurisdictions and their regulatory authorities.

13 Question: Should tradespeople with an out-of-Alberta certificate with a Red Seal who are working in Alberta keep their certificate valid in their home province?

Yes. Tradespeople should always keep their trade certificates valid.

14 Question: What do people need to do to have their certificate recognized?

Nothing. Tradespeople with recognized certificates, whether or not they have a Red Seal endorsement, do not need to register and do not need to obtain an Alberta certificate or identification. Their employers may want to verify the authenticity of the certificate.

The Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board has made an order ([*Certification and Certificate Recognition Order, Board Order 2/2009*](#)) recognizing all certificates issued by a regulatory authority in Canada in an occupation that is a designated trade or occupation in Alberta as equivalent to an Alberta certificate in that trade or occupation.

15 Question: How do these agreements affect apprentices?

Neither of these agreements affects apprentices or apprenticeship programs. They apply only to people who have been certified.

Apprentices who are registered in another province or territory may work in Alberta under that apprenticeship program. If an apprentice intends to live and work in Alberta permanently, they should register as an Alberta apprentice. They are recognized at the same level as they are in their home province or territory.

16 Question: Alberta already recognizes trade certificates from other provinces that do not have a Red Seal. Do other provinces?

While the revised Chapter 7 of the *Agreement on Internal Trade* comes into effect on April 1, 2009, not all jurisdictions are implementing the changes on that date. Some are waiting until August 2009. Check with the applicable province or territory.