

Checklist: Common Business Practices

The following checklist is meant to be used as a starting point for your business. The list is not considered all inclusive. Check all that apply to your situation.

- English and French are the official languages of communication in Canada.
 - English is most common in Alberta
 - Take classes to improve your English if needed
- Familiarize yourself with Alberta business culture and values through books, magazines, Internet, TV, radio, and talking to people. Business practices in Alberta follow Western culture.
- Dress code: ensure that you have the proper wardrobe for the type of business you will be doing (e.g. office = professional clothing, manual labor = casual clothing).
- Avoid the use of heavy perfumes and scents, especially in offices and buildings that have been tagged as “Scent Free Zones” (areas where people are not allowed to use perfumes and scents).
- Men and women are treated equally doing business in Canada .
- The weather is a big part of doing business in Alberta and you might find that businesses slow down or pick up depending on the weather. Ensure you adjust your business practices to the seasons and customer behaviour.
- Create professional looking documents for your business. These say a lot about you, your business, and your brand.
 - letterhead
 - business cards
 - invoices
 - marketing, advertising & promotional materials like a website, social media, etc.
- Privacy and confidentiality is important.
 - Keep client and employee contact information and details confidential (e.g., social insurance numbers, names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.)
- Networking is important.
 - Online networking via LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social media platforms
 - In-person at industry events and other business gatherings to build relationship with like-minded people
 - A firm handshake accompanied with eye contact is the appropriate greeting when conducting meetings and business in Alberta (lack of/insufficient handshake & eye contact may be interpreted as disinterest and/or dishonesty)
 - Coffee is very important in Alberta. Meeting over coffee doesn't mean that you have to drink coffee.
- You are responsible for all actions of your business.
 - Treat your customers well by returning calls quickly, responding to emails, and answering questions
 - Honour commitments and always follow through with what you promise
 - Be on time when you meet with clients or other professionals (being 5 minutes early for appointments is ideal)
 - Keep written/printed records of all of your transactions
 - Pay your business taxes on time (seek professional assistance from a bookkeeper/accountant)
 - Pay all of your credit cards, invoices and expenses on time to avoid accruing interest and to help build credit history
- Understand Alberta's employment standards if you choose to hire employees.
 - You MUST abide by these standards and ensure you treat your employees fairly
 - Open a Workers Compensation Board (WCB) account If you have employees
- Common hours of work are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm; however, this can vary depending on the type of business.