



Backgrounder – Compliance and Licensing Fee Increases

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) understands that residents and businesses across the Northwest Territories continue to face affordability pressures and rising costs. Decisions to increase fees are not made lightly.

At the same time, the GNWT must ensure that essential regulatory, licensing, and transportation infrastructure remains sustainable, effective, and able to meet the needs of residents today and into the future, recognizing that delivering these programs and services carries real and ongoing costs.

Coming into force June 15, 2026, the GNWT will implement annual phased 4.4% increases to 2030 for Compliance and Licensing fees, along with the territorial Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based adjustment. Increases to specific fees related to National Safety Code (NSC) commercial vehicles (commercial vehicles weighing more than 4,500 kilograms) will come into force July 1, 2026; this includes Deh Cho Bridge tolls.

Deh Cho Bridge tolls will have a 2.3% CPI adjustment only, subject to annual review. These changes are intended to improve cost recovery, support the continued delivery of services, and address the fact that many fees have remained unchanged for a decade or more despite inflation and rising operating costs.

What is Changing?

The following increases will come into force on June 15, 2026:

- Compliance and Licensing fees will increase by 4.4%, plus the previous year's territorial CPI. These fees include professional licensing and drivers' services, for example.
- Compliance and Licensing fees will continue to increase annually by 4.4%, plus applicable CPI on April 1 of each year through 2030.
- Fees related to offences, suspensions, and penalties will receive an additional one-time increase of 10%, on top of the 4.4% plus CPI adjustment.

The following increases will come into force on July 1, 2026:

- Fees related to (NSC commercial vehicles will increase by 4.4%, plus the previous year's territorial CPI and will continue to increase annually by 4.4%, plus applicable CPI on April 1 of each year through 2030.



- Deh Cho Bridge tolls which apply only to NSC commercial vehicles will increase by only 2.3%, reflecting the previous year's CPI. The Department of Infrastructure will monitor and review these increases annually to assess impacts and ensure the approach remains appropriate.
- Commercial vehicles weighing 4,500 kg or less are not subject to bridge tolls.

A recent release stated that all fees were set to come into effect on June 15, 2026; this date has been revised for some fees due to a system configuration adjustment.

Why Are These Increases Necessary?

Many of the Compliance and Licensing fees have not been increased in approximately 10 years. During that time, the cost of delivering programs and services has increased due to inflation and rising operational expenses.

Rather than implementing a large one-time increase to account for a decade of inflation, the GNWT has chosen a phased approach that gradually adjusts fees over five years to 2030. This approach helps reduce the immediate financial impact on residents and businesses while supporting the long-term sustainability of government services.

The increases will help improve cost recovery for regulatory and licensing services and support efforts to modernize and improve service delivery.

Understanding the Role of CPI

The Consumer Price Index (CPI), published annually by Statistics Canada, measures changes in the cost of goods and services over time and is widely used across Canada as a benchmark for inflation.

Many governments and organizations use CPI-based adjustments to ensure fees and charges keep pace with rising costs rather than requiring larger, less predictable increases in the future.

Deh Cho Bridge Toll Adjustments

The Deh Cho Bridge toll structure is intended to support recovery of the costs associated with constructing and maintaining this important piece of transportation infrastructure.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, commercial vehicle tolls were adjusted annually based on CPI. In 2020, tolls increased per the previous year's territorial CPI of 1.6%, following



normally scheduled reviews and adjustments. They were immediately suspended for several months to support supply chain stability and economic recovery during an unprecedented period of uncertainty.

This year's 2.3% increase reflects the previous year's inflation rate and represents the first Deh Cho Bridge toll adjustment in six years.

Examples applying the fee increases include:

- A typical 5-6 axle transport truck currently paying \$186 per crossing will see the toll increase to approximately \$190.
- A typical 7-8 axle fuel transport truck currently paying \$327 per crossing will see the toll increase to approximately \$335.

The GNWT recognizes that some transportation costs may ultimately be passed on to consumers. The Department of Infrastructure will monitor impacts over the coming year and assess whether future adjustments may be warranted.

Balancing Fiscal Responsibility and Affordability

The GNWT recognizes that affordability and the cost-of-living remain a significant concern for many Northwest Territories residents.

For most residents, increases to driver and vehicle licensing services are expected to have a limited impact on household costs because these services are typically accessed only periodically.

For example:

- A 12-month vehicle registration currently costing \$83 would increase to approximately \$88.50.
- The fee to reinstate a driver's license following an impaired driving offence would increase from \$319 to approximately \$392, reflecting the one-time 10% adjustment in addition to the standard increase.

The additional increase applied to offence-related fees will only impact individuals who have had their license suspended. This increase is intended to reinforce accountability while helping recover administrative costs associated with compliance and enforcement activities.



Looking Ahead

The GNWT remains committed to balancing affordability considerations with responsible fiscal management. These adjustments are intended to help ensure that regulatory, licensing, and transportation services remain reliable, sustainable, and capable of serving residents and businesses across the Northwest Territories.

Annual reviews will help the GNWT monitor impacts, assess cost recovery objectives, and make informed decisions about future fee adjustments.