



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2023

Historic settlement reached in class action lawsuit against the City of Leduc for systemic discrimination, sexual misconduct, and sexual assault against female employees

Calgary, AB - The City of Leduc and Plaintiffs Mindy Smith and Christa Steele, through their counsel, Robert Martz, Richard Steele, Sydney Black, and Alanna Wiercinski at Burnet, Duckworth and Palmer LLP (BD&P) have released a [Joint Statement](#) announcing a historic settlement agreement in the class action lawsuit filed against the City of Leduc for workplace misconduct in February, 2022.

This is the first settlement of a class action involving sexual misconduct and sexual assault in a fire department or municipality in Canada. The individual compensation in this settlement exceeds that provided by Canada's most notable workplace harassment class action settlements to date, which involved systemic sexual abuse and harassment within the RCMP and the Department of National Defense.

The terms of this settlement include:

- The highest per-person monetary compensation in a Canadian class-action settlement for workplace misconduct. Each member of the class is eligible for financial compensation between \$10,000 and \$285,000.
- A lengthy claimant eligibility time period: any woman who worked at the City of Leduc over the past 20 years is eligible to participate in the class action.
- A confidential, non-adversarial, and non-confrontational claims process meant to facilitate claimant participation and provide a safe way for women to come forward.
- Significant non-monetary remedies including a public apology from the Mayor of Leduc and a requirement that Leduc take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that no retaliation occurs against women who participate in the class action or who make a claim.

The per-person settlement amounts combined with the non-adversarial claims process, non-monetary remedies, and the lengthy claimant eligibility time period,

arguably makes this settlement the most progressive workplace class action settlement in Canadian history. This settlement will have a significant impact on Canadian case law moving forward and sets a precedent for victim advocacy in workplace harassment settlements.

Former Leduc firefighter and plaintiff Christa Steele said “When we set out to bring to light the discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual assault happening at Leduc, it was so it would stop and those who are responsible for the years of abuse we faced would be held accountable. There remains a lot of work to do, but I am relieved that Leduc has finally acknowledged the harm that women suffered in a workplace where they were preyed upon and sexual assault was acceptable and without consequence.”

BD&P's lead lawyer in this case, Robert Martz, spoke to these challenges, saying: “When this case came to us we knew that we had a responsibility to do whatever we could to help these women. We took on this case despite its legal challenges because what we saw at Leduc cannot be tolerated and those who discriminate, sexually harass, and sexually assault women need to be held accountable. We also believe that the legal system needs to evolve to hold employers accountable who tolerate this type of systemic sexual misconduct, and to encourage women who suffer this type of workplace abuse to come forward.”

A hearing for the Court of King's Bench to approve the settlement is scheduled for July 4, 2023 in Edmonton, AB.

The full settlement can be viewed at <https://leducclassaction.com/>

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About BD&P

BD&P is a full-service law firm headquartered in Calgary, Canada. Our lawyers are bright, deeply talented legal minds who work on a broad spectrum of corporate and litigation matters, sitting across the table from national and international firms. Our clients cross a variety of sectors, including energy, renewables, agribusiness, technology and life sciences. We're not just legal advisors, we are true partners.

BD&P has been called unconventional, and we think that makes us better partners to our clients for now — and for the future.