



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Occupational Health and Safety Report Second Quarter, 2009

Date:	September 10, 2009
To:	Employee and Labour Relations Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report provides information on the status of the City's health and safety system, specifically on activities, priorities and performance during the second quarter of 2009. There was a minimal decrease in the number of lost time injuries (0.4%) and a 9.8% decrease in the number of recurrence injuries relative to the first two quarters of 2008. The number of injuries where health care only was sought decreased significantly by 17.3%. WSIB invoiced costs were \$2.3 million lower than those for the same time period in 2008, due to a reduction in costs associated with firefighter cancer claims.

Information is provided where there have been significant changes in accident experience and costs within divisions, as well as actions taken to improve health and safety performance.

Bill 168 (An Act to amend the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* with respect to violence and harassment in the workplace) is still awaiting second reading in the provincial legislature. A consultative review of the City's existing Workplace Violence and Anti-harassment policies will be initiated following second reading of the Bill.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. the Occupational Health and Safety Report, Second Quarter 2009 be forwarded to City Council

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts to this report beyond what have already been approved in the current year's budget.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of February 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 2005, City Council approved the recommendation of the Employee and Labour Relations Committee that staff report to Council quarterly on the functioning of the City's health and safety system. This report is for the second quarter of 2009.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Improved health and safety performance, and a strong health and safety culture with a target of a zero-injuries workplace, is a key priority for the City. This report on the City's health and safety performance is intended to enable the Mayor and Councillors to monitor the City's performance.

COMMENTS

Injury and Accident Statistics

Number of lost time and medical aid injuries and recurrences

Information regarding reported work-related injuries/illnesses by division, during the first two quarters of 2009, is attached in Appendix A. Information is also provided for the same time period in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. Information provided includes:

- number of lost time injuries (LTIs): injuries/illnesses that were approved by the WSIB or are awaiting WSIB adjudication, as the employee has lost time from work as a result of a reported workplace injury
- number of recurrences: injuries/illnesses that were approved by the WSIB or are awaiting WSIB adjudication, as the employee has sought medical aid and/or has lost time as a result of a previously reported workplace injury/illness. No new incident has taken place
- number of medical aids: injuries/illnesses that were approved by the WSIB or are awaiting WSIB adjudication, as the employee has sought medical aid but not lost time from work as a result of a reported workplace injury.

The number of LTIs decreased by 0.4% relative to the first two quarters of 2008. There was a significant reduction in injuries resulting from slips, trips and falls and from musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) arising from overexertion, repetition and awkward postures. There was also a reduction in the number of workplace violence incidents from 11 to three. Injury categories that saw an increase included: transportation accidents, contact with objects or equipment (i.e. being struck by or striking against) and exposure to hazardous substances or environments (predominantly exposures to infectious agents during outbreaks in long term care homes or child care centres).

The number of recurrence injuries decreased by 9.8% overall. The most significant category for reduction was MSDs (22% reduction). The number of medical aids decreased by 17.3%, as a result of decreases in incidents in all injury categories, but most

significantly in the categories of: contacts with objects and equipment, assaults and violent acts, and slips, trips and falls.

There have been significant changes in accident experience in a few divisions, as follows:

- Emergency Medical Services achieved a 16% decrease in LTIs, mostly as a result of a decrease in MSDs.
- Facilities and Real Estate achieved a 25% decrease in LTIs, mostly as a result of a decrease in the number of slips, trips and falls.
- Fire Services achieved an 8% decrease in LTIs, mostly as a result of a decrease in MSDs.
- Overall, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) has maintained a low frequency rate of injuries relative to the corporate average: 3.44 relative to the corporate 7.17 (see LTI frequency below). For the first two quarters of 2009, however, they experienced an increase in the number of MSD injuries (20 to 36). Over 30 MSD training sessions have been held for Supervisors and Joint Health and Safety Committee members, and the hazard identification portion of the MSD program has been initiated.
- Toronto Water experienced a 10% increase in LTIs, mostly as a result of transportation accidents. In several of these accidents, the driver of the non-City vehicle was determined to be at fault.

Lost Time Injury (LTI) Frequency

LTI frequency represents the number of LTI events (lost time approved by the WSIB or awaiting WSIB adjudication decision) per 200,000 hours worked (100 employee-years). Beginning in 2007, information with respect to time lost from work due to work-related injuries and productive hours worked by City employees was collected in a manner that enabled reporting on LTI frequency. Utilization of the formula for LTI frequency allows for:

- comparison of the performance of each City division relative to others,
- comparison of the performance of each City division with its own performance during previous years, and
- future benchmarking with other organizations that report on LTI frequency.

Frequency rates for divisions are reported in Appendix B. The City's LTI frequency during the first two quarters of 2009 was 7.17, as compared to 8.07 for 2007 and 6.89 for 2008. It should be noted that, as WSIB decisions regarding claims are made or amended, the City's frequency value is adjusted, for example, the frequency reported for the first two quarters of 2008 (at the time of reporting) was 8.36. This number represents the number of LTIs that will occur per 100 employees in a year assuming injuries continue to occur at the rate experienced year to date. It should also be noted that even one LTI in a division with a small number of staff can result in a skewed high LTI frequency.

Injury and Accident Costs [Overall Costs (all firm numbers) and Invoiced New Firm Costs by Division]

Overall costs incurred under all City firm numbers during the first two quarters of 2009 are reported in Appendix C. Comparable information is also provided for 2005, 2006,

2007 and 2008. Total costs during the first two quarters were \$15.9 million. This includes costs that continue from injuries sustained in pre-amalgamation municipalities. These costs are \$2.3 million lower than for the first two quarters of 2008 as a result of a reduction in costs arising from firefighter cancer claims.

The “WSIB Invoiced Costs” report identifies all WSIB invoiced costs for firm number 855935, by division. Appendix D(i) provides the information for divisions whose costs year-to-date were less than \$100,000. Appendix D(ii) provides the same information for divisions whose costs were greater than \$100,000. Information for 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 is also provided for comparison purposes.

Critical Injuries

Four work-related critical injuries were reported to the Ministry of Labour (MOL) in the second quarter of 2009. Two health-related events were reported to the MOL as potential critical injuries, one in which a Fire Services employee experienced a seizure in the fire boat and one in which an Emergency Medical Services employee experienced a heart attack while he was a passenger in an ambulance en route to a call.

Work-related critical injuries reported:

- A Shelter, Support and Housing Administration employee was assaulted by a client while supervising a meal line. The employee was punched in the face, fell to the ground, hit his head and lost consciousness for a few minutes. The client was arrested and removed from the property and has been service restricted for a period of one year.
- A Parks, Forestry and Recreation employee broke his right ankle while coming downstairs. The work area was clear.
- A Human Resources employee slipped and fell on stairs, fracturing her wrist. No unsafe conditions were identified.
- A Toronto Water employee slipped on rocks while walking along the side of a water treatment plant. He put his arm out to break a fall, fracturing his left elbow.

MOL Orders/Visits without Orders

The MOL issued four orders to the City during the second quarter of 2009. These orders related to:

- Development and implementation of a preventative maintenance program for a waste gas burner
- Wearing of protective headwear on a construction site
- Provision of proof of backhoe inspection on a construction site
- Producing for the MOL a copy of an accident investigation report

All orders were complied with.

Tracking of MOL visits that do not result in orders has also been initiated. Reports on the issues reviewed during these visits and any recommendations or comments received are prepared for, and reviewed by, the Occupational Health and Safety Coordinating Committee (OHSCC). It is intended that this information will inform the OHSCC

regarding the MOL's priorities and expected employer responses to these priority issues. There were ten MOL visits to City facilities in the second quarter of 2009 that did not result in orders. These visits occurred for similar reasons to those reported during the first quarter: proactive inspections under the Safe at Work Ontario program, investigation of critical injuries, follow up on complaint calls or follow up on reported outbreaks. Attention during these visits focussed on the functioning of joint health and safety committees (JHSCs), review of protective measures and procedures (generally and specific to equipment inspections, reporting of incidents to the MOL, workplace violence prevention, infectious disease protocols) and training.

MOL/Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Initiatives

WSIB Review of JHSC Certification

The WSIB is preparing for stakeholder consultation on JHSC member certification. Approximately 120,000 Ontarians have completed the requisite training and been certified under the WSIB's program since 1998. The WSIB has identified challenges with the current program, such as lack of understanding by stakeholders of the process of certification, inconsistent delivery of training among various training providers and inconsistent approaches to hazard assessment among employers. Consequently, consultation with workers, employers, labour and employer organizations and certification training providers is planned. Items to be highlighted for consideration during consultation will include course duration, course content, a workplace hazard assessment template or tool and validation of hazard assessment and possible improvements to Part 2 (workplace-specific hazard training). HR Occupational Health and Safety is participating in the WSIB's preparation for the consultation process and closely monitoring its outcomes, so as to ensure that the City's needs are represented in the process and that the City's JHSC certification program continues to be aligned with the WSIB's direction.

Safe at Work Ontario Blitzes

The MOL continues its inspection blitzes under its Safe at Work Ontario strategy. During the second quarter, the primary areas of focus during these blitzes were MSDs in all industry sectors and new and young workers in the industrial sector. The MOL has announced that the focus of its blitzes in September will be hazards involving chemicals used in all workplaces, with swimming pools and health care facilities especially noted.

Bill 168

The MOL announced in April proposed legislative amendments to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OH&SA)* to protect workers from workplace violence and harassment. Bill 168 (An Act to amend the *OH&SA* with respect to violence and harassment in the workplace and other matters) received first reading in the legislature on April 20th. The City already has *Workplace Violence* and *Anti-Harassment* policies. These policies may need minor revision with respect to the proposed legislation, but leave the City well-placed to comply with legislative requirements. Consultative review of these policies will be initiated following second reading of Bill 168.

Health and Safety Initiatives and Activities

Occupational health and safety efforts during the second quarter continued to focus on the City's three key 2009 initiatives:

- implementation of the MSD Prevention policy,
- Occupational Health and Safety Continuous Improvement – Target Zero, and
- Occupational Health and Safety Audit – phase 2

During the second quarter, divisions continued to work on their Pandemic Influenza Exposure Risk Assessments. Divisional risk assessments are currently being reviewed by HR - Occupational Health and Safety and Toronto Public Health. Summary reports of these risk assessments will be tabled with the Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee and the OHSCC in September/October and any necessary follow up will be initiated.

CONTACT

Alison Anderson
Director, Occupational Health and Safety
Human Resources
Ph. (416) 392-5028
Fax (416) 392-3920

Cindy O'Brien
Manager, Occupational Health,
Safety and Workers' Compensation
Human Resources
Ph. (416) 392-5021
Fax (416) 392-5504

SIGNATURE

Joseph P. Pennachetti
City Manager

Bruce L. Anderson
Executive Director, Human Resources

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A
Appendix B
Appendix C
Appendix D(i)
Appendix D(ii)