



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Occupational Health and Safety Report Third Quarter, 2009

Date:	November 9, 2009
To:	Employee and Labour Relations Committee
From:	City Manager and Executive Director, Human Resources
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 first three quarters of 2009. There was a decrease in the number of lost time injuries (7.8%) and a decrease in the number of recurrence injuries (10.5%) relative to the first three quarters of 2008. The number of injuries where health care only was sought decreased significantly by 16.6%. WSIB invoiced costs were \$2.9 million lower than 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 being taken to improve health and safety performance.

Bill 168, the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act (Violence and Harassment in the Workplace) received second reading in the provincial legislature on October 5th. On October 20th, it was further debated, carried and referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. the Occupational Health and Safety Report, Third 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 third 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 injury/illnesses by division, during the first three 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 7.8% relative to the first three quarters of 2008. There was a significant reduction in musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), as well as in injuries arising from slips, trips and falls, and from contacts with objects and equipment. Within the same period, increases were noted in transportation accidents, as well as from exposures to infectious agents during outbreaks in long term care homes and child care centres.

The number of recurrences decreased by 10.5% overall, with the most significant reductions in injuries arising from contacts with objects and equipment and in the reduction of MSDs. The number of medical aids decreased by 16.6%, as a result of decreases in incidents in nearly all injury categories.

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

- Emergency Medical Services experienced a 17.4% decrease in LTIs, mostly as a result of a decrease in MSDs.
- Facilities and Real Estate experienced a 31% decrease in LTIs, mostly as a result of a decrease in injuries related to contact with objects and equipment as well as a decrease in MSDs.
- Fire Services experienced a 16.4% decrease in LTIs, mostly as a result of a decrease in MSDs.
- Toronto Public Health experienced a 16.1% increase in LTIs, with small increases in the number of injuries within all categories.

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). 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 three quarters of 2009 was 6.97, as compared to 8.15 for 2007 and 6.96 for 2008. WSIB decisions regarding claims are made or amended, the City's frequency value is adjusted accordingly. 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 be noted that even one LTI in a division with a small number of staff can result in a very 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 three quarters of 2009 are reported in Appendix C. Comparable information is also provided for 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. Total costs during the first three quarters were \$23.5 million. This includes costs that continue from injuries sustained in pre-amalgamation municipalities. These costs are lower than the \$26.4 million incurred during the first three quarters of 2008 as a result of reduction in costs arising from firefighter cancer claims.

The "WSIB Invoiced Costs" report identifies all WSIB invoiced costs for the current Toronto 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 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

Seven work-related critical injuries were reported to the Ministry of Labour (MOL) in the third quarter of 2009. Additionally, a health-related event was reported to the MOL as potential critical injury when a Children's Services employee fainted while escorting children up stairs.

Work-related critical injuries reported:

- A Toronto Water employee fractured his left elbow when he missed a step while getting down from a truck.
- A Fire Services employee tripped and fractured his right wrist while walking in the upper hose bed on a pumper truck to access a storage compartment.
- A Parks, Forestry and Recreation employee fell and fractured his left wrist while stepping over a guard rail.
- An Emergency Medical Services employee tripped on a curb and fractured his right wrist while carrying supplies from a station to the ambulance,
- A Fire Services employee fractured his right foot when exiting from the cab of a truck.
- A Facilities security employee sustained a fractured left ankle when arresting an aggressive individual.
- A Toronto Public Health employee lost consciousness after the vehicle she was driving was struck by another vehicle whose driver was making an illegal U-turn.

MOL Orders/Visits without Orders

The MOL issued thirteen orders to the City during the third quarter of 2009. These orders related to:

- Posting of health and safety materials (the Act, the corporate occupational health and safety policy)
- Covering on pits
- Obstruction of electrical panels
- Availability and accessibility of material safety data sheets for chemicals in the workplace
- Maintenance of equipment in good condition
- A written heat stress program unique to a work operation
- Eyewash fountains

All orders were complied with.

MOL inspectors also issued three requirements for the City to provide information, two for utility locates and one for an incident report.

MOL visits that do not result in orders are also tracked. Reports on the issues reviewed during these visits and any recommendations or comments received are 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 five MOL visits to City facilities in the third quarter of 2009 that did not result in orders.

MOL/Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Initiatives

Safe at Work Ontario Blitzes

The MOL continues its inspection blitzes under its Safe at Work Ontario strategy. The focus of its blitzes in September was hazards involving chemicals used in all workplaces, with special attention to swimming pools and health care facilities. A number of orders issued to the City in the third quarter resulted from Safe at Work Ontario inspections. In September, the MOL announced that for six months, beginning in September, MOL inspectors will visit about 800 vehicle body repair workplaces to check for hazards involving:

- the use and maintenance of hoists, jacks and other lifting equipment
- paints and materials containing hazardous substances such as isocyanates, and
- materials handling, storage and ventilation.

Inspectors will also check workers' certification and training, assess the effectiveness of health and safety procedures, and document infractions of environmental protection regulations.

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. Bill 168 received second reading in the provincial legislature on October 5th. On October 20th, it was further debated, carried and referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. The City's *Workplace Violence* and *Anti-Harassment* 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 the City's policies will be initiated shortly to enable timely compliance with any legislative amendments when they receive Royal Assent.

Health and Safety Initiatives and Activities

Occupational health and safety efforts during the third quarter continued to focus on the City's key 2009 initiatives to the extent permitted, in light of the summer's labour disruptions.

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ATTACHMENTS

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