

## **Occupational Health and Safety Report: End of Year 2022**

**Date:** June 23, 2023  
**To:** General Government Committee  
**From:** Chief People Officer  
**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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This report provides information on the status of the City's health and safety system, specifically performance for 2022 and actions and priorities to address identified hazards.

There was a 25.4% increase in the number of lost time injuries (LTIs) in 2022 relative to 2021. This increase was primarily due to workplace exposures to COVID-19. The City continually followed the guidance provided by the federal and provincial governments as well as advice provided by Toronto Public Health with respect to its pandemic response.

There was a 13.3% decrease in the number of recurrences and a 1.5% increase in the number of medical aid injuries in 2022 relative to 2021.

The overall invoiced costs related to the City's current Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) firm number increased from \$39.8 million in 2021 to \$49.5 million in 2022. This increase in costs is primarily attributed to claims for mental/emotional illnesses or disorders, followed by those attributed to firefighter cancers, and musculoskeletal disorders resulting from exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Chief People Officer recommends that:

1. City Council receive the End of Year 2022 Occupational Health and Safety Report for information.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting of February 1, 2 and 3, 2005, City Council approved the recommendation of the Employee and Labour Relations Committee that staff report regularly to Council on the functioning of the City's health and safety system. The direction was in response to changes in the Criminal Code with respect to health and safety. This report provides details for the End of Year 2022.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2005/agendas/council/cc050201/pof2rpt/cl005.pdf>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Issue Background**

Continuously improving health and safety performance and building a strong health and safety culture continue to be key priorities 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.

### **Injury and Incident Statistics**

#### **Lost Time Injuries, Recurrences and Medical Aid Injuries**

Information regarding reported Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) incidents (work-related injuries/illnesses), by division, during 2022 is attached in Appendix A. Information is also provided for the years 2018 to 2021. Information provided includes:

- Number of Lost Time Injuries (LTIs): injuries/illnesses in which lost time was approved by the WSIB or is 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 lost additional time as a result of a previously reported workplace injury/illness. No new incident has taken place; and
- Number of medical aids: injuries/illnesses in which health care only was approved by the WSIB or is awaiting WSIB adjudication, as the employee either has sought medical aid but not lost time from work as a result of a reported workplace injury or the employee's lost time has not been approved by the WSIB.

Overall, there was a 25.4% increase in the total number of LTIs in 2022 relative to 2021. The primary contributors to LTIs were:

- Exposure to infectious agents;
- Injuries resulting from slips, trips, missteps and falls;
- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) resulting from exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring.

The primary contributors are explained further below.

Exposure to infectious agents increased by 89.0% from 355 in 2021 to 671 in 2022. The increase was primarily related to work related COVID-19. Divisions that experienced the greatest number of this type of LTIs in 2022 were:

- Seniors Services & Long Term Care (325)
- Toronto Paramedic Services (121)
- Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (96)
- Toronto Fire Services (56)

Actions taken to address identified hazards associated with work-related COVID-19 included:

- The City continually followed the guidance provided by the federal and provincial governments as well as advice provided by Toronto Public Health with respect to its pandemic response;
- COVID-19 Information Resources for employees were made available and updated regularly on the City's intranet site and through regular broadcast communications;
- Seniors Services & Long Term Care, Toronto Paramedic Services, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration and Toronto Fire Services continued to have in place enhanced COVID-19 protection measures in the workplace which included multiple layers of safety precautions for the protection of workers and for infection control and outbreak management.

Injuries resulting from slips, trips, missteps and falls increased by 23.6% from 216 in 2021 to 267 in 2022. Divisions that experienced the greatest number of this type of LTIs were:

- Toronto Paramedic Services (52)
- Parks, Forestry & Recreation (51)
- Toronto Fire Services (37)

Actions taken to address identified hazards associated with slips, trips, missteps and falls included:

- Toronto Paramedic Services delivers slips, trips and falls training to all new recruits and has introduced slips, trips and falls to their continuing medical education curriculum for all staff;
- Parks, Forestry & Recreation delivered safety talks and orientation training to all branches on the prevention of slips, trips and falls and continued to review work procedures, equipment, clothing, boots and work areas with a high number of incidents;
- Toronto Fire Services' Central Occupational Health & Safety Committee reviews all slip, trip and fall injuries to identify trends and is involved in recommending preventative measures.

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) resulting from exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring increased by 12.9% from 350 in 2021 to 395 in 2022. Divisions that experienced the greatest number of this type of LTIs were:

- Toronto Paramedic Services (213)

- Toronto Fire Services (46)
- Seniors Services & Long Term Care (41)

Actions taken to address identified hazards associated with exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring included:

- The City has an MSD Prevention Policy with an established, networking group of Divisional MSD Program Leads and the development and implementation of an annual reporting template for divisions to report on their MSD Prevention activities and results;
- Regular reports are provided to the Occupational Health & Safety Co-ordinating Committee regarding the City's MSD performance;
- Toronto Paramedic Services had success in 2022 in trialing and implementing equipment for paramedics to minimize efforts for awkward and excessive patient lifts as well as methods to reduce equipment weight via its MSD Prevention Committee;
- Toronto Fire Services continues to review all MSD incidents for appropriate preventative actions;
- Seniors Services & Long Term Care developed numerous divisional specific MSD policies/procedures in consultation with JHSCs and initiated several MSD prevention/ergonomic related projects related to the assessment of manual material handling processes, ergonomic space plan reviews and furniture procurement.

## Recurrences

There was a 13.3% decrease in recurrences in 2022 relative to 2021, primarily in injuries resulting from exposure to traumatic or stressful events and overexertion.

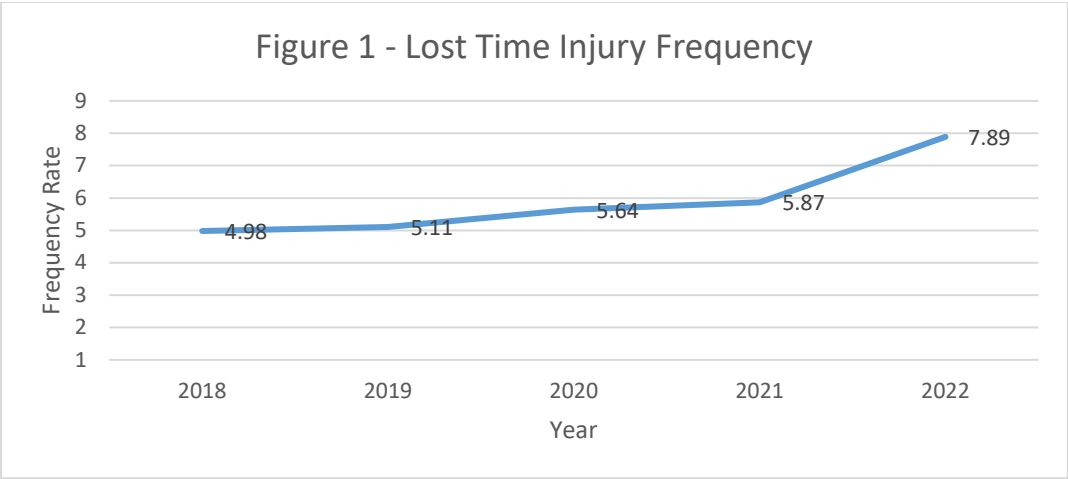
## Medical Aid Injuries

There was a 1.5% increase in the total number of medical aid injuries in 2022 relative to 2021, primarily in injuries resulting from exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring.

## Lost Time Injury (LTI) Frequency

LTI frequency represents the number of LTI events (lost time approved by the WSIB or pending WSIB adjudication decision) per 200,000 hours worked (100 employee-years).

Figure 1 below shows the City's LTI frequency during 2022 relative to the frequency during the years 2018 to 2021. The City's 2022 LTI frequency increased from 5.87 in 2021 to 7.89 in 2022 and continues on an upward trend.

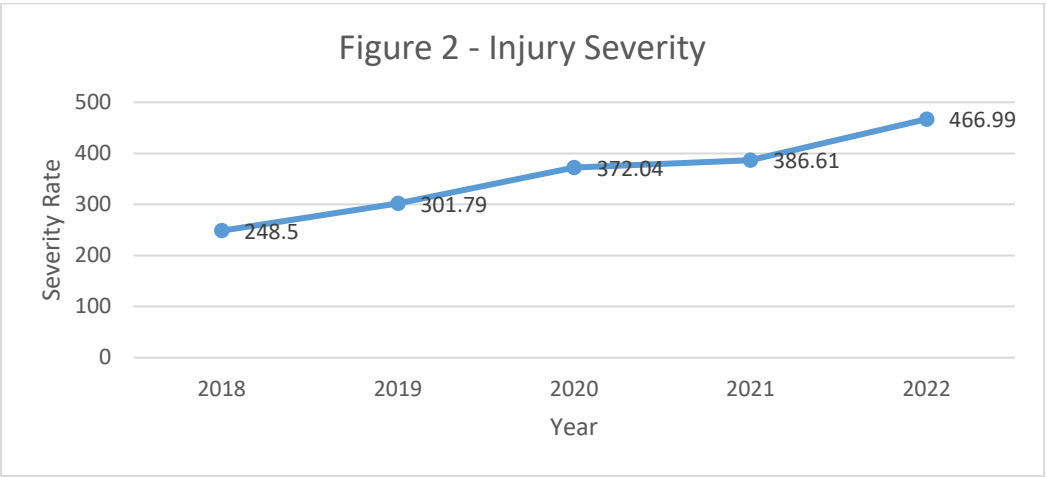


Frequency rates for divisions are reported in Appendix B. It should be noted that in a small City division, a single LTI can result in a high frequency rate.

**Injury Severity Rate**

The injury severity rate is a standardized statistic that enables comparison, year-over-year, of the number of days lost relative to hours worked. The severity number represents the number of days lost per 100 employees in the year.

Figure 2 below shows the City’s severity rate during 2022 relative to the severity for the years 2018 to 2021. The City's injury severity rate increased from 386.6 in 2021 to 467.0 in 2022 and continues on an upward trend.

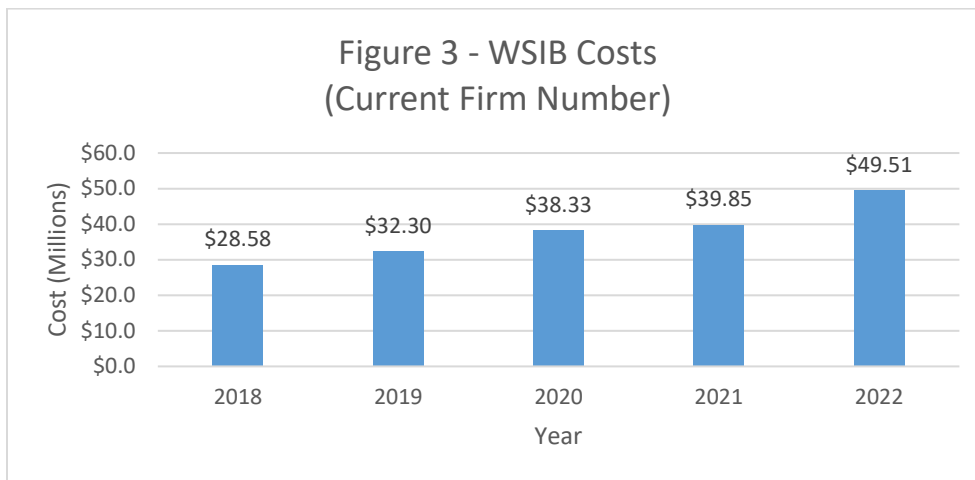


Toronto Paramedic Services, Toronto Fire Services and Shelter, Support & Housing Administration experienced the highest rates of lost time severity in 2022. All three divisions had the highest number of claims for mental/emotional illnesses or disorders in 2022. This upward trend has been consistent since 2018 and is expected to continue. Mental/emotional stress injury claims result in lengthier recovery periods and are more challenging with respect to return to work efforts.

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

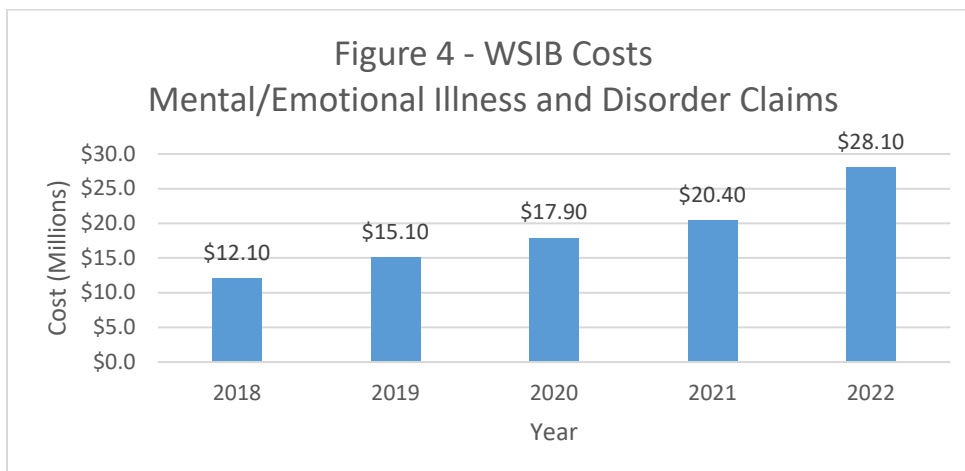
Appendix C provides the overall costs incurred under all City firm numbers during 2022. Information is also provided for the time period 2018 to 2021. There was an increase in overall costs for all firm numbers from \$47.9 million in 2021 to \$56.7 million in 2022. For the former firm numbers, there was a decrease in costs from \$8.0 million in 2021 to \$7.2 million in 2022. This downward trend is forecasted to continue given the age of claims associated with the former firm numbers.

Figure 3 below shows the overall invoiced costs related to the City's current WSIB firm number.



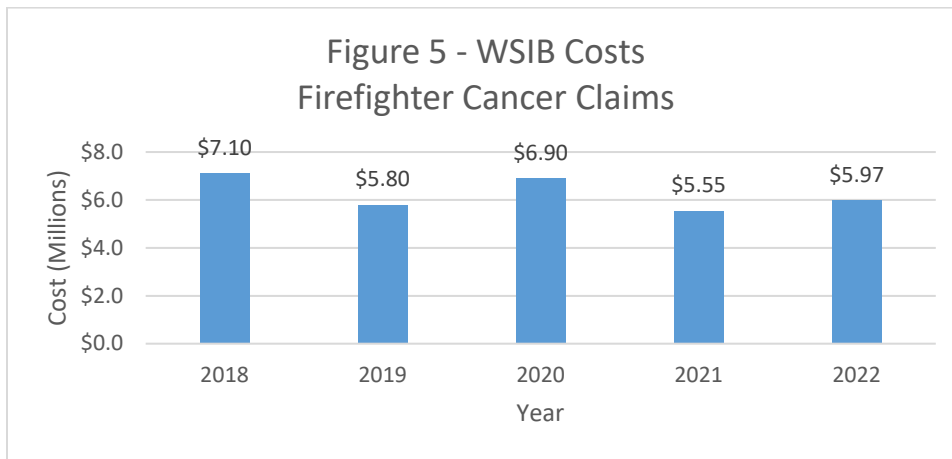
The overall invoiced costs related to the City's current WSIB firm number increased from \$39.8 million in 2021 to \$49.5 million in 2022. The costs associated with claims for mental/emotional illnesses or disorders represent the largest portion of costs incurred in 2022, followed by those attributed to firefighter cancers and MSDs resulting from exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring.

Figure 4 below shows the City's overall invoiced costs related to claims for mental/emotional illnesses or disorders.



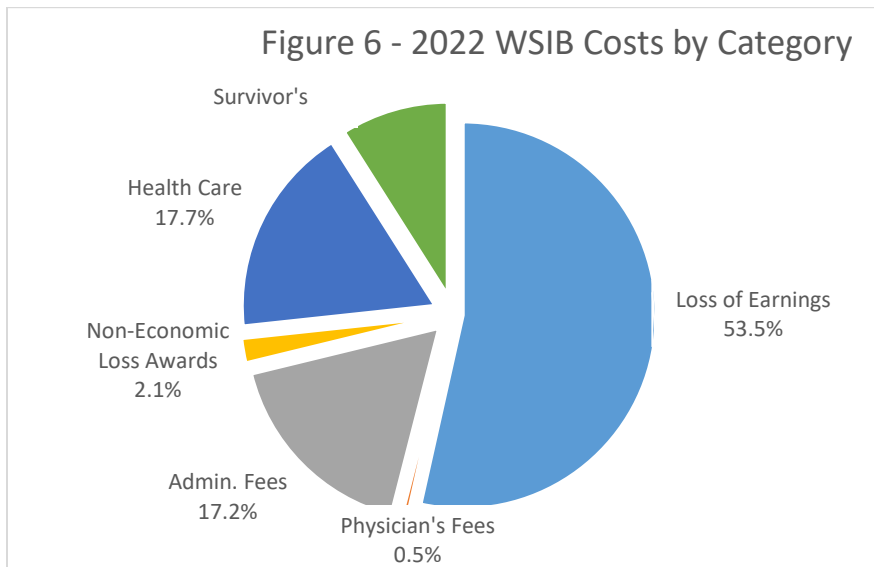
There was an increase in costs associated with claims for mental/emotional illnesses or disorders from \$20.4 million in 2021 to \$28.1 million in 2022. The most significant increase in cumulative costs occurred in Toronto Paramedic Services and Toronto Fire Services. Much of this increase is a result of legislation introduced in 2016 that presumes if a first responder is diagnosed with PTSD by a psychiatrist or psychologist, the condition is work-related. PTSD claims are very costly due to the nature and cost of health services required and the significant length of time required to achieve return to work.

Figure 5 below shows the City's overall invoiced costs related to firefighter cancer claims.



There was an increase of costs associated with claims for firefighter cancer claims from approximately \$5.5 million in 2021 to \$6.0 million in 2022. Presumptive legislation regarding firefighter cancers was introduced in 2014 and was rolled out incrementally. The number of new retroactive cases declined in 2022. However, the Provincial Government announced that it will be expanding cancer coverage for firefighters in 2023. As such, and in alignment with the introduction of new cancer coverage in past years, an increase in costs associated with new or retroactive firefighter cancer claims is expected in 2023.

Figure 6 provides the City's WSIB Current Firm costs by cost category in 2022. In 2022, costs increased across all categories, most notably in loss of earnings and health care benefits.



Appendix D (i) provides the current City's "WSIB Invoiced Costs" for 2022 for divisions whose costs were less than \$50,000 and Appendix D (ii) for divisions whose costs were greater than \$50,000.

### Critical Injuries and Fatalities

Occupational health and safety legislation stipulates requirements for reporting fatalities and critical injuries to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD). A critical injury is an injury of a serious nature that:

- (a) places life in jeopardy,
- (b) produces unconsciousness,
- (c) results in substantial loss of blood,
- (d) involves the fracture of a leg or arm but not a finger or toe,
- (e) involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot but not a finger or toe,
- (f) consists of burns to a major portion of the body, or
- (g) causes the loss of sight in an eye.

There were thirty-two (32) work-related critical injuries reported to the MLITSD in 2022. Of these:

- Nineteen (19) involved fractures;
- Twelve (12) involved loss of consciousness;
- Seventeen (17) were attributed to workplace factors;
- Two (2) were not attributed to the workplace factors;
- One (1) involved a substantial loss of blood.

Appendix E provides further information for these critical injuries.



All of these incidents were investigated in the workplace. Information regarding these incidents and any actions taken to prevent a recurrence were shared with joint health and safety committees (JHSCs) or health and safety representatives (HSRs).

Where a person is killed from any cause at a workplace, the employer is obligated to notify the MLITSD. There were no fatalities due to any workplace causes in 2022.

## **MLITSD Orders/Visits without Orders**

The MLITSD issued six (6) compliance-based orders to the City in 2022. The orders related to:

- Administrative posting requirements and procedures (1)
- Surfaces to be free of hazards and obstructions (1)
- Instruction/Training (3)
- Construction obligation (1)

All orders were complied with within the required time frames.

There were one hundred and ninety-nine (199) MLITSD visits to City facilities/work operations that did not result in orders during 2022. The top three reasons that initiated these visits were in response to:

- Reports of occupational illnesses/outbreaks (106):
  - Ninety-seven (97) were related to COVID-19 reports of occupational illness
  - Nine (9) were related to other occupational illness and follow-up visits
- Critical injuries/serious injuries (43)
- Complaints (21)

The remaining visits without orders were in relation to the following:

- Blitzes/initiatives (9)
- Work refusal investigations (5)
- Routine inspections (5)
- Follow up on orders (4)
- Workplace Violence (3)
- Workplace Harassment (3)

## **MLITSD Initiatives**

### **Upcoming Provincial Health and Safety Initiatives**

In 2022, the MLITSD continued with its Prevention Works Strategy for the future occupational health and safety system for years 2021 to 2026, and its mission to ensure that every worker goes home safely to their family at the end of the day. The MLITSD's priorities were informed by the lessons learned over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and also builds on the previous Healthy and Safe Ontario Workplaces Strategy. The MLITSD used a risk-based process to focus its initiatives which took into account the following:

- Injury, illness and fatality rates
- Compliance history
- Nature of the work (e.g. inherent job hazards)

- Current events
- Vulnerability of workers
- Strategic priorities
- Advice from stakeholders and workplaces

In 2023, the MLITSD will run a number of workplace compliance campaigns and initiatives. The following campaigns and initiatives may potentially impact the City:

- Prevention of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD)
- Respiratory Protection Program
- Asbestos in building structures (hygiene)

## **Key City Health & Safety Initiatives**

In 2022, the focus shifted from COVID-19 related health & safety policies, protocols and tools for the protection of employees, to safely reopening locations and civic centres, returning staff to work, and providing rapid antigen tests, face masks and hand sanitizers.

Some planned health and safety initiatives were delayed, however, work continued on the following in 2022:

- MLITSD MSD Prevention Initiative including updated guidelines and templates for the annual MSD Divisional Program Report;
- Joint management/labour review and submission of JHSC Terms of Reference for Multi-Workplace JHSCs in City divisions.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Mary Madigan-Lee  
Chief People Officer

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Appendix A - WSIB Incidents (January – December) by Division  
Appendix B - LTI Frequency by Division  
Appendix C - WSIB Costs for all Firm Numbers  
Appendix D (i) - WSIB Invoiced Costs to Year End (<\$50,000)  
Appendix D (ii) - WSIB Invoiced Costs to Year End (>\$50,000)  
Appendix E - Critical Injuries reported to the MLITSD in 2022