

Occupational Health and Safety Report: End of Year 2024

Date: November 24, 2025
To: General Government Committee
From: Chief People Officer
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides information on the status of the City's health and safety system, specifically, performance for 2024 and actions and priorities to address identified hazards.

There was a 3.2% decrease in the number of lost time injuries (LTIs) in 2024 relative to 2023.

There was an 11.8% decrease in the number of recurrences and a 9.4% decrease in the number of medical aid injuries in 2024 relative to 2023.

The overall invoiced costs related to the City's current Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) firm number increased from \$57.3 million in 2023 to \$65.9 million in 2024. This increase in costs was 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

The Chief People Officer recommends that:

1. City Council receive the End of Year 2024 Occupational Health and Safety Report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications arising from approval of this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of February 1, 2 and 3, 2005, City Council approved the recommendation of the Worker 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 2024.

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

COMMENTS

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 WSIB incidents (work-related injuries/illnesses), by Division, during 2024 is attached in Appendix A. Information is also provided for the years 2020 to 2023. 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 worker has lost time from work as a result of a reported workplace injury/illness
- Number of Recurrences: injuries/illnesses that were approved by the WSIB or are awaiting WSIB adjudication, as the worker 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 worker has either sought medical aid but not lost time from work as a result of a reported workplace injury/illness or lost time has not been approved by the WSIB

Overall, the total number of LTIs decreased by 3.2%, from 1,485 in 2023 to 1,438 in 2024. The primary contributors to LTIs were:

- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) related to exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring
- Exposure to infectious agents
- Injuries resulting from Slips, Trips, Missteps and Falls

The primary contributors are explained further below.

MSDs resulting from exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring increased by 9.7% from 403 in 2023 to 442 in 2024. Divisions that experienced LTIs in this category were:

- Toronto Paramedic Services (232)
- Toronto Fire Services (63)
- Parks, Forestry & Recreation (41)
- Spread across multiple Divisions (106)

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

- The City has an MSD Prevention Policy with an established working group of Divisional MSD Program Leads, as well as an annual reporting template for Divisions to report their MSD prevention activities and results
- Regular reports are provided to the Occupational Health and Safety Co-ordinating Committee regarding the City's MSD performance
- Toronto Paramedic Services introduced new equipment (i.e., Doty Belt) to support safer patient lifts and transfers in consultation with the divisional Equipment Committee, and monitored the success of previously implemented equipment (i.e., QuikLitter and ErgoSlide) while holding Continuing Medical Education sessions with enhanced MSD training
- Toronto Fire Services Central Health & Safety Committee continued to review all MSD incidents for appropriate preventative actions. Introduced an engineering control (i.e., installed an additional step on the rear of a fire apparatus to address a safety concern raised by the JHSC as the original step was too high)
- Parks, Forestry & Recreation set-up Health & Safety Focus Groups to review Safe Work Procedures or equipment as needed with divisional H&S Officers, management, JHSCs, workers, P&E Ergonomists and H&S Consultants

Exposure to infectious agents decreased by 23.1% from 476 in 2023 to 366 in 2024. This positive trend was driven by notable reductions across several divisions:

- Seniors Services and Long-Term Care (127)
- Toronto Paramedic Services (109)
- Toronto Shelter & Support Services (21)
- Spread across multiple Divisions (109)

The decrease reflects the effectiveness of actions taken to mitigate hazards in this category. These actions included:

- Seniors Services and Long-Term Care implemented the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Leader Model, assigning 1 IPAC Manager for each long-term care home and held bi-monthly meetings of the divisional IPAC Committee, with representation from all 10 homes and divisional leadership. Additional focus was given to annual mandatory education for all staff, monthly hand hygiene audits, and communication of new provincial directives
- Toronto Paramedic Services reinforced key principles outlined in its Infection Control Manual, guided by the Point of Care Risk Assessment and applied appropriate infection control measures, including the use of PPE
- Toronto Shelter & Support Services advanced its IPAC practices through strong collaboration with Toronto Public Health and their joint IPAC Steering Committee.

Regular IPAC audits were performed by Practice Health Check. IPAC Leads at each site ensured consistent adherence to protocols and supported a safe and healthy environment across all locations

Injuries resulting from slips, trips, missteps and falls increased by 4% from 275 in 2023 to 286 in 2024. Divisions that experienced LTIs in this category were:

- Toronto Paramedic Services (73)
- Toronto Fire Services (45)
- Seniors Services and Long-Term Care (36)
- Spread across multiple Divisions (132)

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

- Toronto Paramedic Services implemented a targeted campaign which included strategies for safely moving through snow and over obstacles. The divisional Fleet Steering Committee also trialed new lighting for ambulance steps
- Toronto Fire Services Central Occupational Health & Safety Committee reviewed all related injuries to identify trends, were involved in recommendations of preventative measures, and reviewed policies and procedures to ensure they were reflective of the work on fire scenes and areas where firefighting operations occur
- Seniors Services and Long-Term Care focused on the 2024 Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) health care proactive campaign on slips, trips, and falls which reinforced appropriate footwear direction. The divisional Health & Safety Management Committee and JHSCs reviewed related incidents to identify trends and were involved in recommending preventative measures

Recurrences

There was an 11.8% decrease in recurrences, from 76 in 2023 to 67 in 2024, primarily in injuries related to MSDs resulting from exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring.

Medical Aid Injuries

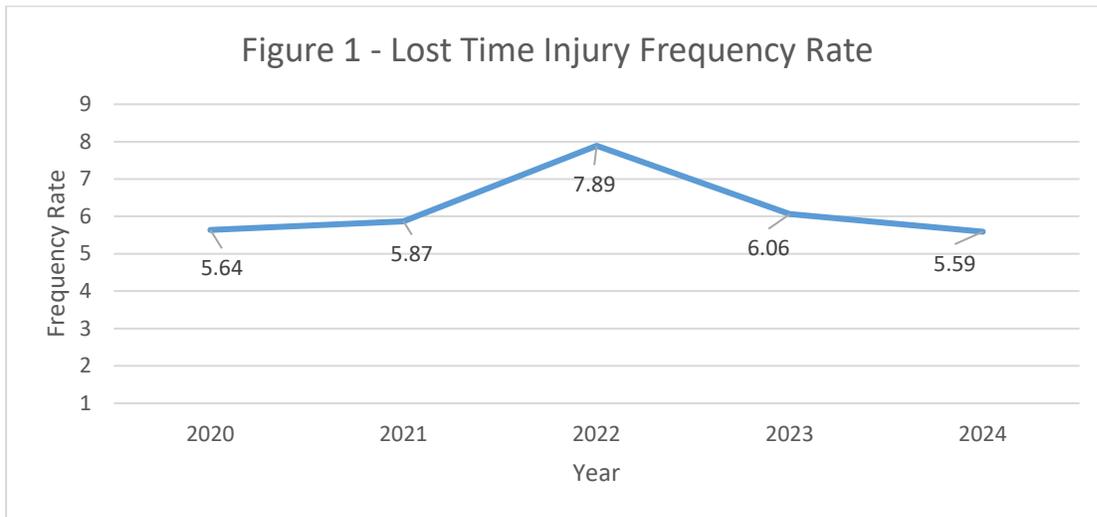
There was a 9.4% decrease in medical aid injuries, from 709 in 2023 to 642 in 2024, primarily in injuries/illnesses related to exposure to harmful substances, environments or stress (e.g., exposure to caustic, toxic or allergenic agents).

Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate

The lost time injury frequency rate represents the number of lost time events (lost time approved by the WSIB or pending WSIB adjudication decision) per 200,000 hours worked. The lost time injury frequency rate calculates the number of lost time incidents per year for every 100 workers (working 40 hours/week).

Figure 1 below shows the City's lost time injury frequency rate during 2024 relative to the lost time injury frequency rate during the years 2020 to 2023. The City's lost time

injury frequency rate decreased from 6.06 in 2023 to 5.59 in 2024 and indicated a downward trend from the previous year, and also when compared to 2020.

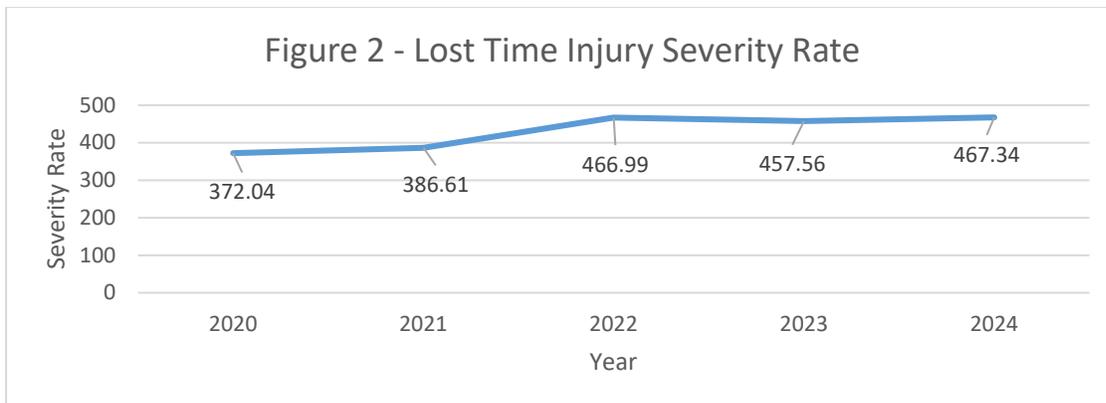


Lost time injury frequency rates for Divisions are reported in Appendix B. It should be noted that in a small City Division, a single lost time incident can result in a high frequency rate. Note: this Appendix only lists lost time injury frequency rates for those Divisions who have experienced any lost time WSIB incidents over the period from 2020 to 2024.

Lost Time Injury Severity Rate

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

Figure 2 below shows the City's lost time injury severity rate during 2024 relative to the lost time injury severity rate for the years 2020 to 2023. The City's lost time injury severity rate increased from 457.56 in 2023 to 467.34 in 2024 and indicates an upward trend from the previous year and compared to 2020.



In 2024, Toronto Paramedic Services, Toronto Fire Services, and Toronto Shelter & Support Services experienced the highest lost time injury severity rates of all City

Divisions. These three Divisions also had the highest number of claims for mental/emotional illnesses or disorders. This upward trend has been consistently observed since 2020 and is expected to continue. Mental/emotional stress illness claims often involve extended recovery periods and greater complexities in return-to-work planning and support.

WSIB Costs - Costs from All Firm Numbers and Current Firm Number

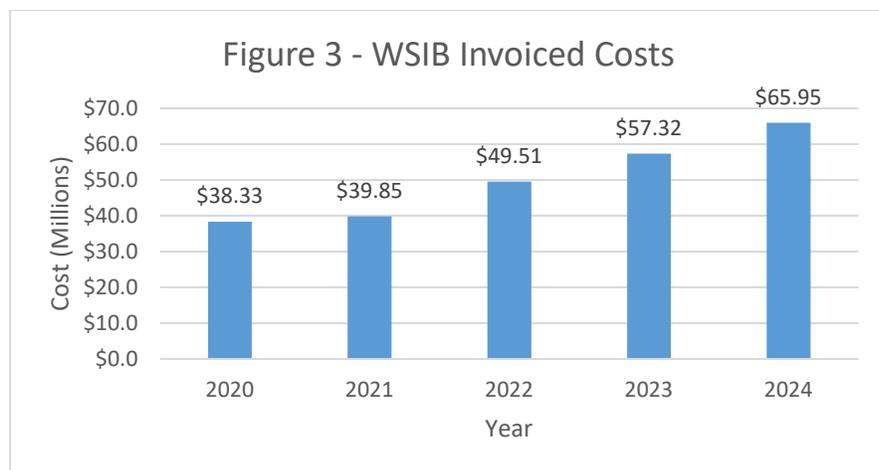
Appendix C provides a summary of the overall costs incurred under the City's firm numbers* in 2024, along with data from 2020 to 2023. Total costs across all firm numbers increased from \$65.6 million in 2023 to \$73.9 million in 2024. Costs for the former firm numbers decreased, from \$8.3 million in 2023 to \$7.9 million in 2024. The overall upward trend in costs is expected to continue, primarily due to recent regulatory amendments related to presumptive legislation, lowering service requirements. These changes also extend coverage retroactively to January 1, 1960. For further information, please refer to the details under Figure 5.

*The WSIB firm number is the City's account number with the WSIB. The City currently uses one firm number and has since amalgamation. The City has historical firm numbers for the previous municipalities.

When a worker in a Division has a work-related injury/illness, WSIB claims are initiated under the City's WSIB firm number. Any associated costs incurred and billed by WSIB are allocated to the Division in which the worker was employed at the time of the injury/illness.

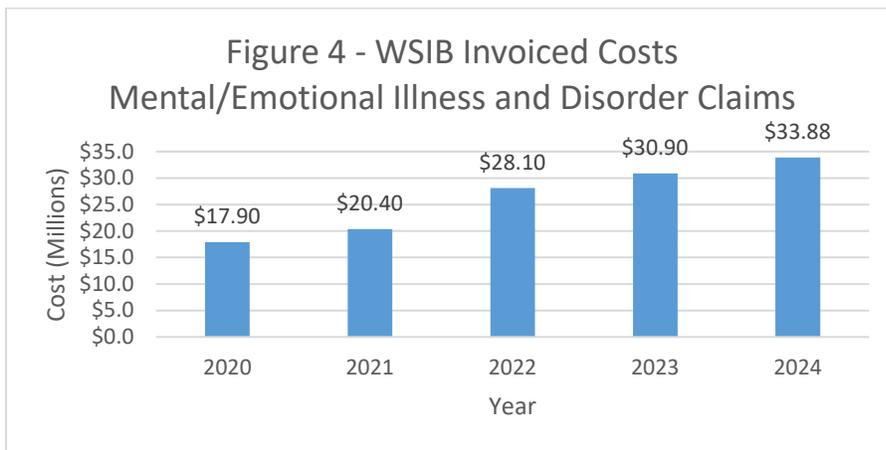
All figures shown hereafter are representative of the City's current WSIB firm number.

Figure 3 below shows the WSIB invoiced costs.



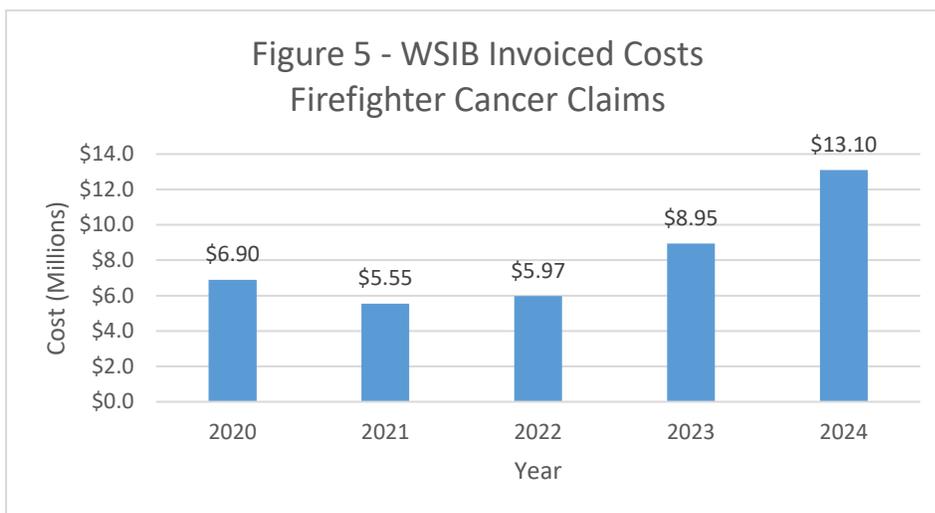
The invoiced costs related to the City's current WSIB firm number increased from \$57.32 million in 2023 to \$65.95 million in 2024. The costs associated with claims for mental/emotional illnesses or disorders represented the largest portion of costs incurred in 2024, followed by those attributed to firefighter cancers and MSDs resulting from exertion, repetition, awkward posture and vibration/jarring.

Figure 4 below shows the WSIB 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 \$30.90 million in 2023 to \$33.88 million in 2024. The most significant increase in cumulative costs occurred in Toronto Paramedic Services and Toronto Fire Services. Much of this increase resulted from legislation introduced in 2016, presuming first responder Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnoses, by a psychiatrist or psychologist, as work-related. PTSD claims are very costly due to the nature and cost of health services required and the significant length of time necessary to achieve a return-to-work.

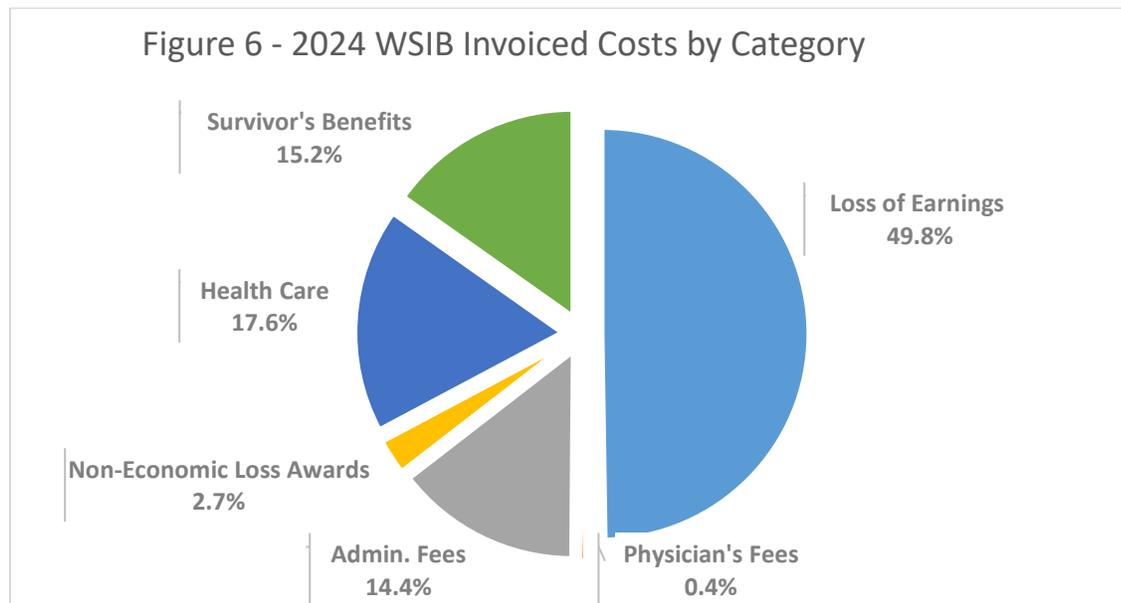
Figure 5 below shows the City's WSIB invoiced costs related to firefighter cancer claims.



There was an increase in costs associated with firefighter cancer claims from approximately \$8.95 million in 2023 to \$13.10 million in 2024. Presumptive legislation regarding firefighter cancers was introduced in 2014 and was rolled out incrementally. With the introduction of new cancer coverage in past years, an increase in costs associated with new/retroactive firefighter cancer claims was experienced in 2024 and is expected to continue in 2025. In 2024, the required years of service for presumptive

skin cancer coverage was reduced from 15 to 10 years. The required years of service for presumptive esophageal cancer coverage was reduced from 25 to 15 years.

Figure 6 provides the City's 2024 WSIB invoiced costs by category. Compared to 2023, costs increased for Survivor's Benefits and Non-Economic Loss Awards. Physician Fees and Health Care remained unchanged, while Administration Fees and Loss of Earnings decreased.



Appendix D(i) outlines the “WSIB Invoiced Costs” for 2020-2024 and depicts Divisions whose costs were less than \$50,000 in 2024.

Appendix D(ii) outlines the “WSIB Invoiced Costs” for 2020-2024 and depicts Divisions whose costs were greater than \$50,000 in 2024.

Critical Injuries and Fatalities

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 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) critical injuries reported to the MLITSD in 2024, twenty-eight (28) were confirmed to be work-related. Of these:

- Fifteen (15) involved fractures
- Seven (7) involved loss of consciousness

- Six (6) involved continuation visits

Appendix E provides further information about the above critical injuries. All of the above incidents were investigated in the workplace. Information regarding these incidents and any actions taken to prevent a recurrence were shared with JHSCs or Health and Safety Representatives, as applicable.

Where a person is killed from any cause at a workplace, the employer is obligated to notify the MLITSD. There were no City of Toronto worker fatalities due to workplace causes in 2024.

MLITSD Visits and Orders

In 2024, there were one hundred and twenty-seven (127) MLITSD visits to City of Toronto facilities and work operations, including repeat visits.

The top three reasons that initiated these MLITSD visits were in response to:

- Reports of Occupational Illness/Outbreak (48):
 - Twenty-nine (29) of which related to occupational illnesses, other than COVID-19
 - Nineteen (19) related to COVID-19
- Critical Injury (32)
- Complaints (21)

The remaining twenty-six (26) visits were initiated for the following reasons:

- Workplace Harassment
- Blitz/Initiatives
- Requested Visit
- Workplace Violence
- Inspection
- Work Refusals
- JHSC Related
- Follow-up on Order

Out of all MLITSD visits in 2024, eight (8) compliance-based orders were issued to the City of Toronto. The orders related to:

- Administrative (postings, notifications, review of policies/practices, inspections, work refusal procedure, compliance plans) (6)
- Surfaces free of hazards/obstructions; housekeeping (1)
- Instruction, information, training and/or supervision (1)

The City of Toronto adhered to all required compliance dates with respect to all of the above orders.

MLITSD Initiatives

Upcoming Provincial Health and Safety Initiatives

In 2024, the MLITSD committed to meeting requirements outlined in its Prevention Works Strategy for the 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 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 Field Intelligence

In 2025, the MLITSD is running a number of workplace compliance campaigns and initiatives as follows, that may potentially impact the City:

- Education, Outreach and Awareness
- Focused Inspections
- Home Health Care
- Long-term Care Homes
- Material Handling
- Workplace Violence Prevention Campaign
- Occupational Hygiene Campaigns: Worker exposures to chemical agents in the workplace; and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training based on the amended Hazardous Products Regulations

Key City Health and Safety Initiatives

In 2024, the City focused on the development and review of health and safety policies, protocols and tools for the protection of workers, specifically in the following areas:

- Respirator Protection
- Bed Bugs
- Heat Stress

Additionally, the City continued to work on the following:

- Produced the Guide to Fostering Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplaces
- Joint management/labour review and submission of JHSC Terms of References for Multi-Workplace JHSCs in City Divisions
- Updated Critical Incidents in the Workplace: A Guide for Employees; and Management Guide
- Co-ordinated communication of new/changing health and safety legislative requirements (e.g., construction projects)

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Mary Madigan-Lee
Chief People Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Incidents by Division (January to December 2024)

Appendix B - Lost Time Frequency Rates by Division (2020-2024)

Appendix C - WSIB Invoiced Costs for All Firm Numbers (2020-2024)

Appendix D(i) - Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Invoiced Costs Less Than \$50,000 (2020-2024)

Appendix D(ii) - Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Invoiced Costs Greater Than \$50,000 (2020-2024)

Appendix E - Critical Injuries Reported to the MLITSD in 2024