2016 COUNCIL REPORT - Workplace Safety

Introduction

The Winnipeg Public Service generates an Annual Report on workplace safety for Council[1]. Performance measures used in the report are Lost Time Injury (LTI) Rates and Workers Compensation Board (WCB) costs. These are the primary indicators used by the City to measure workplace safety progress.

All LTI metrics include those injuries that result in absence from work and have an accepted or pending WCB claim. These figures should be considered as conservative estimates because they do not include time loss associated with long-term disability, or injury claims processed through Manitoba Public Insurance.

Performance Analysis

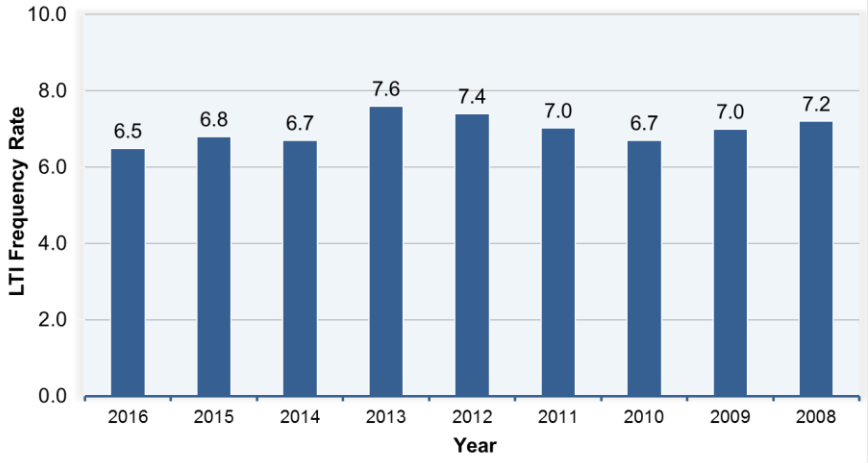
LOST TIME INJURY (LTI) FREQUENCY

LTI Frequency is the number of lost time injuries per 100 workers per year. It can be used as an internal benchmark to determine if progress has been made within an organization to reduce the occurrence of injuries. Figure 1 illustrates that the City's 2016 LTI Frequency was 6.5 LTI per 100 workers per year which was 4% lower than the frequency experienced in 2015 (6.8).

Since 2008 organizational LTI Frequency has averaged 7.0 LTI per 100 workers per year. LTI Frequency in 2016 was lower than standard deviation[2] for the reporting period.

In Figure 2 (see page 2), the City's LTI Frequency statistics are further broken down by department. LTI Frequency at the departmental level was varied over the reporting period with no statistically significant trend.

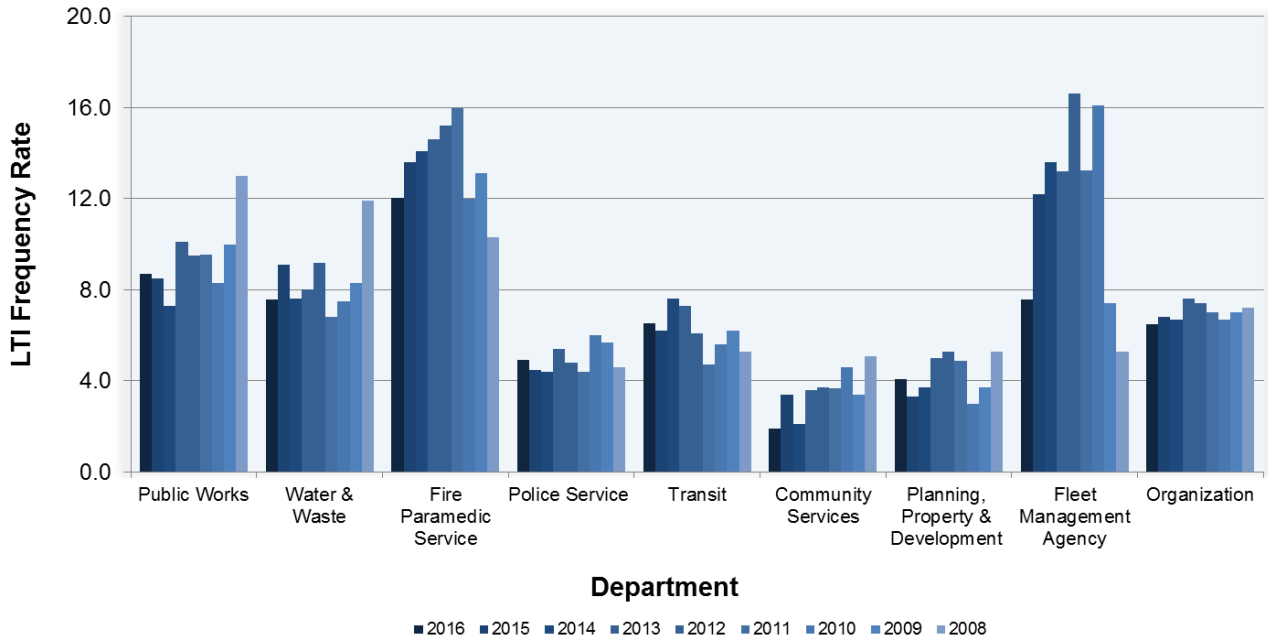
Figure 1: Organizational Lost Time Injury (LTI) Frequency Rates (2008-2016)



[1] In 2014, City Council received the *Workplace Safety Audit* dated November 2013 and adopted that an Annual Report be submitted to Council within 6 months of the previous year end (Council Minutes – September 24, 2014, Minute No. 752).

[2] A statistic used to determine how data is spread out from the average or expected value.

Figure 2: Departmental Lost Time Injury (LTI) Frequency Rates (2008-2016)*



* Only includes departments with LTI Frequency consistently greater than zero.

LOST TIME INJURY (LTI) SEVERITY

LTI Severity reflects the seriousness of an injury and also the effectiveness of return to work and disability management programs. Severity is measured as hours lost due to injury per 100 workers per year and includes any hours lost in a given year regardless of the year of injury.

Figure 3: Organizational Lost Time Injury (LTI) Severity Rates (2008-2016)

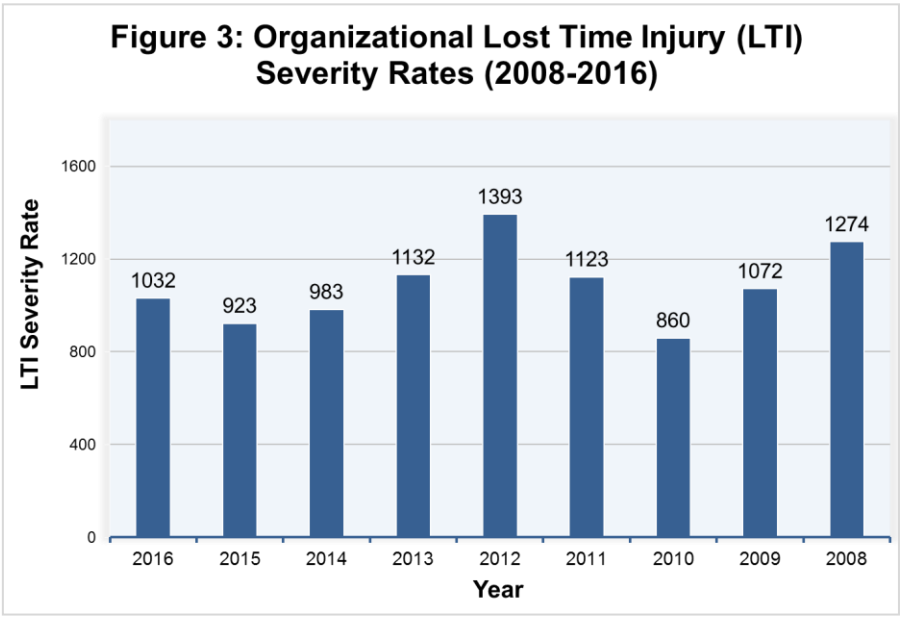
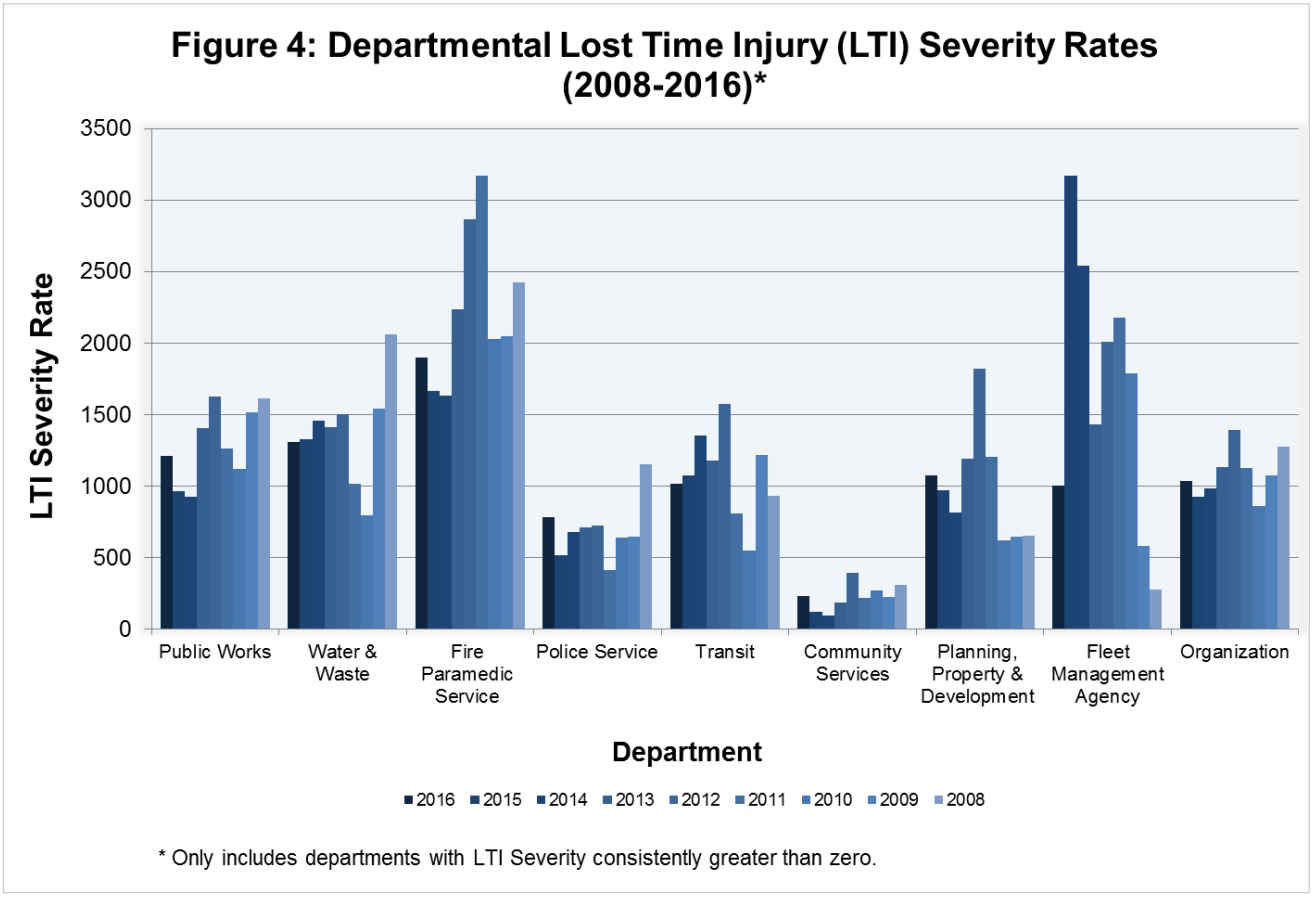


Figure 3 illustrates that the City's 2016 LTI Severity was 1032 hours lost per 100 workers per year; 12% higher than 2015 (923) but lower than average (1088) for the reporting period (2008-2016).

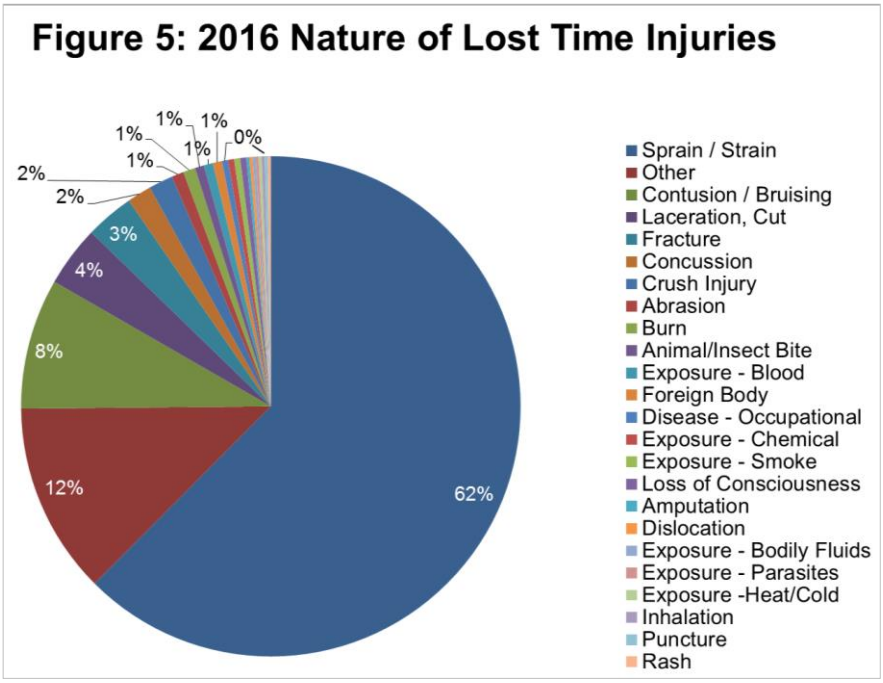
As with LTI Frequency, departmental LTI Severity performance (see Figure 4, page 3) was varied over the reporting period with no statistically significant trend.



NATURE OF LOST TIME INJURY

In addition to the LTI data, both at the organization level and the department level incidents are analyzed by the nature of injury. This information enables the City to focus efforts and monitor trends.

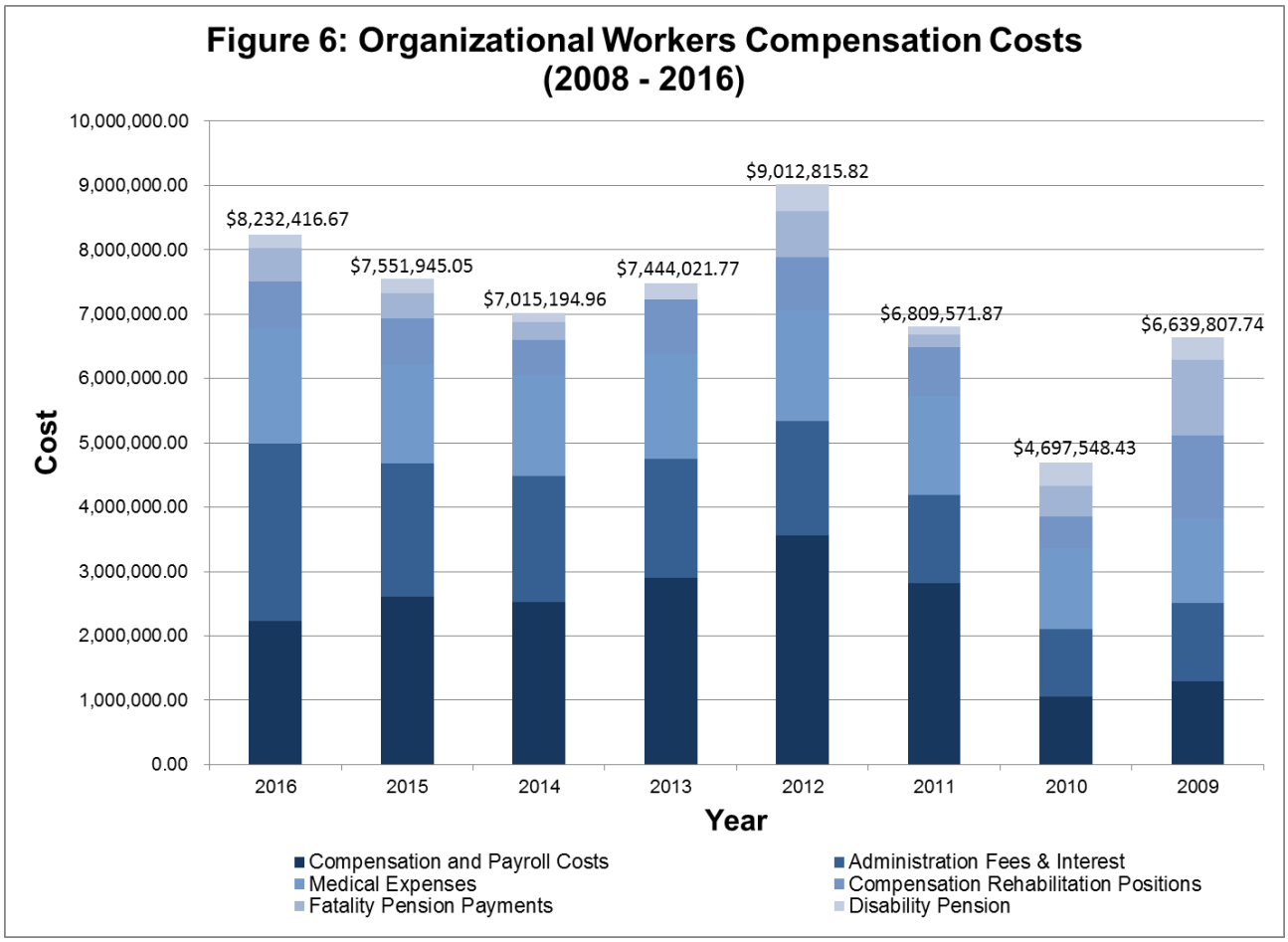
As Figure 5 illustrates the most predominant injury that led to time loss in 2016 was strains and sprains, accounting for 62% of all lost time injuries.



WORKERS COMPENSATION COSTS

Workers Compensation Board (WCB) related costs, such as compensation for direct hours lost, rehabilitation costs and WCB claim administration costs are tracked by the Workers Compensation Branch, Risk Management Division of the Corporate Finance Department.

See Appendix A for definitions of WCB cost categories.



WCB related costs increased to $8.2 million in 2016 from $7.6 million in 2015. Although a 15% savings was experienced in compensation/payroll costs in 2016, significant increase in administrative fees (34%) as well as increased medical and fatality pension payments led to an overall WCB cost increase of 9%.

Organizational Workplace Safety Initiatives

Since addressing all of the recommendations made by the *Workplace Safety Audit (2013)* in April 2016 (as discussed in the 2015 Council Report – Workplace Safety), the City has implemented a number of initiatives to enhance workplace safety, including:

1. **Departmental Safety Program Reviews –** In April 2016 protocol was implemented establishing standard safety program review criteria, methodology and reporting requirements at the organizational level. Program reviews have since been completed in

Public Works, Community Services, Planning, Property & Development, Fleet Management, Transit and Water & Waste. Reviews are scheduled for remaining departments in 2017.

2. **Working Alone Safety System –** Many of the services provided by the organization require employees to work alone, not directly supervised or at worksites that are remote from other employees and in circumstances where assistance is not readily available. In January 2017, the organization implemented a standardized system to facilitate safety check-ins with lone workers and emergency notifications.

3. **Hearing Conservation Procedures –** Noise-induced hearing loss, caused by prolonged or excessive noise exposure, is one of the most prevalent occupational health concerns today. The City revised its Hearing Conservation Program in March 2017 to enhance awareness and promote follow-up when noise hazards are identified in the workplace.

4. **Industry-Based Safety Program (IBSP) for Self-Insured Employers** – The City has recently partnered with SAFE Work Manitoba to develop a program that will facilitate collaboration between some of the largest employers in Manitoba, including municipal, provincial and Crown Corporations. Focus of the program will be to create a safety certification process, leading to fewer injuries and illnesses for workers.

The City has implemented an initiative ('Body@Work') to reduce workers' compensation claims and extended absences associated with strains and sprains. Body@Work has delivered a multi-faceted communication strategy, new opportunities for employee education, health and fitness, and a standardized approach to job demands analysis.

Conclusions

- Since 2008 organizational Lost Time Injury (LTI) Frequency performance has been relatively consistent, averaging 7.0 lost time injuries per 100 workers per year.

- Organizational LTI Frequency was 6.5 in 2016; 4% lower than the frequency experienced in 2015 (6.8).

- Organizational LTI Severity was 1032 in 2016; 12% higher than 2015 (923) but lower than average (1088) for the reporting period (2008-2016).

- Workers Compensation Board (WCB) related costs increased to $8.2 million in 2016 from $7.6 million in 2015. Although a 15% savings was experienced in compensation/payroll costs in 2016, significant increase in administrative fees (34%) as well as increased medical and fatality pension payments led to an overall WCB cost increase of 9%.

- The most common injury that led to time loss in 2016 was strains and sprains, accounting for 62% of all lost time injuries.

- Since addressing all of the recommendations made by the *Workplace Safety Audit* (as discussed in the 2015 Council Report – Workplace Safety), the City has implemented a number of initiatives to enhance workplace safety, including; departmental safety program reviews, working alone safety systems, hearing conservation procedures and a recent partnership with SAFE Work Manitoba to develop an Industry Based Safety Program for self-insured employers.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

INJURY STATISTICS:

Lost Time Injury (LTI) Frequency = (# of lost time injuries / total hours worked) x 200,000

Lost Time Injury (LTI) Severity = (hours lost due to LTI / total hours worked) x 200,000

The factor of 200,000 normalizes results to produce the average frequency or severity per 100 workers per year.

WORKERS COMPENSATION COST CATEGORIES:

Compensation and Payroll Costs – wage loss benefits paid to an injured employee while s/he is unable to work in their pre-injury job in whole or in part.

Administration Fees & Interest – portion of the WCB's operating costs/annual expense budget funded by the City of Winnipeg.

Medical Expenses – benefits for healthcare-related services and products used to aid an injured employee's recovery (e.g., healthcare treatment by attending doctors, chiropractors, physiotherapists, etc.).

Compensation Rehabilitation Positions – wages paid to employees who are being accommodated in rehabilitation positions, generally on a temporary and transitional basis, to support the employee's recovery and return to full, regular duties.

Fatality Pension Payments – Benefits for a surviving spouse or common-law partner and dependents of fatally injured employees.

Disability Pension – Compensation for a degree of permanent loss of function processed as a lump-sum benefit (claims after 1991) or a monthly payment (claims before 1992).