2021 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 Workers Compensation Board (WCB) Statistics and Lost Time Injury (LTI) Rates.

WCB statistics used in this report are provided to the City by the WCB with the exception of costs provided for this report by the City's Finance Department. All Lost Time Injury (LTI) metrics are generated internally using the organization's PeopleSoft System. All LTI metrics include those injuries that result in absence from work and have an accepted or pending WCB claim. These figures do not include time loss associated with long-term disability, or injury claims processed through Manitoba Public Insurance.

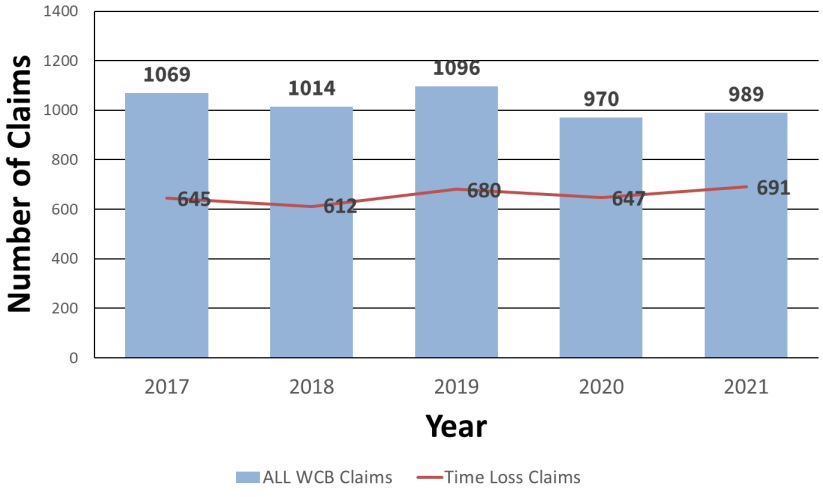
Performance Analysis

WCB CLAIMS

The total number work-related injury and illness claims accepted by the WCB was 989 in 2021. This represents a 2% increase from 2020 (970) but was below average for the reporting period.

The number of accepted Time Loss Claims in 2021 was 691 which was an increase of 7% from 2020 (647).

Figure 1: Organizational WCB Claims (2016-2020)

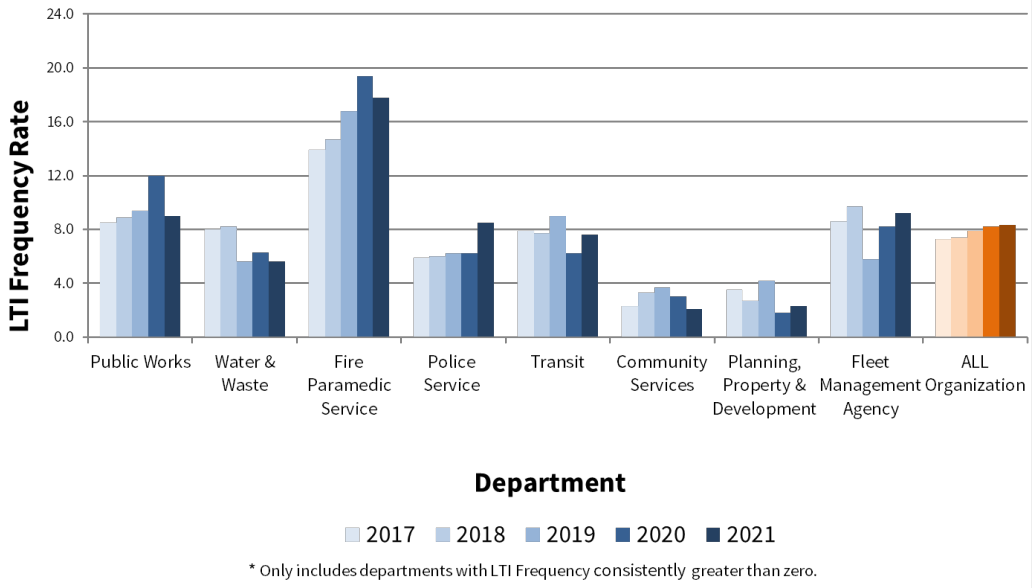


[1] In 2014, City Council received the *Workplace Safety Audit* dated November 2013 and adopted that an Annual Report be submitted to Council within 6 months of the previous year end (Council Minutes – September 24, 2014, Minute No. 752).

LOST TIME INJURY (LTI) RATES

LTI Frequency is the number of lost time injuries per 100 workers per year. The City's LTI Frequency was 8.3 in 2021; higher than year end 2020 (8.2).

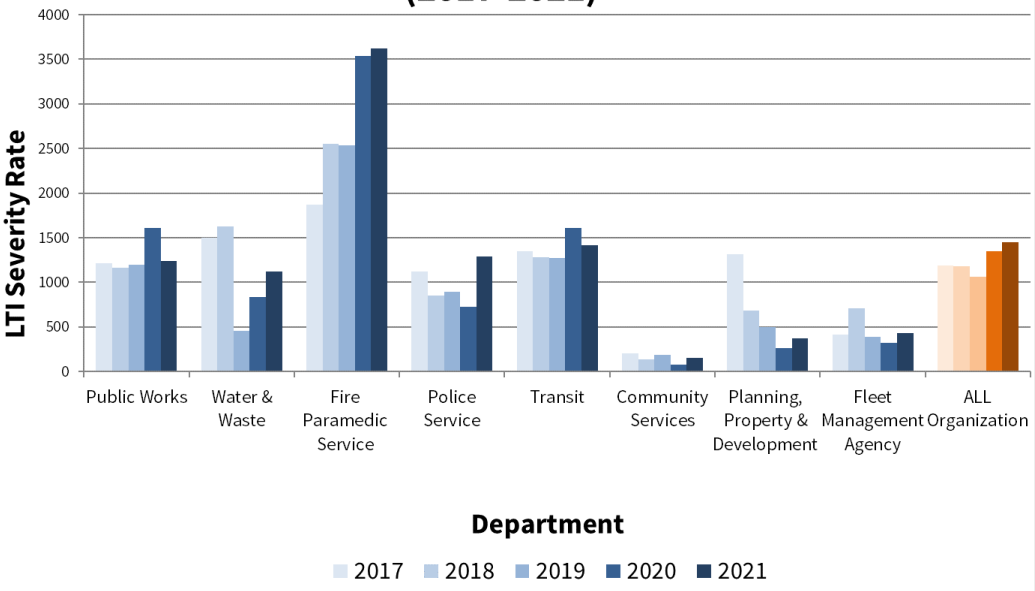
Figure 2: Lost Time Injury Frequency Rates (2017-2021)*



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

LTI Severity is measured as hours lost due to injury per 100 workers per year. It includes any hours lost in a given year regardless of the year of injury. Organizational LTI Severity was 1450 in 2021; higher than year end 2020 (1348). This increase was mainly related to hours lost from prior year injury.

Figure 3: Lost Time Injury (LTI) Severity Rates (2017-2021)*



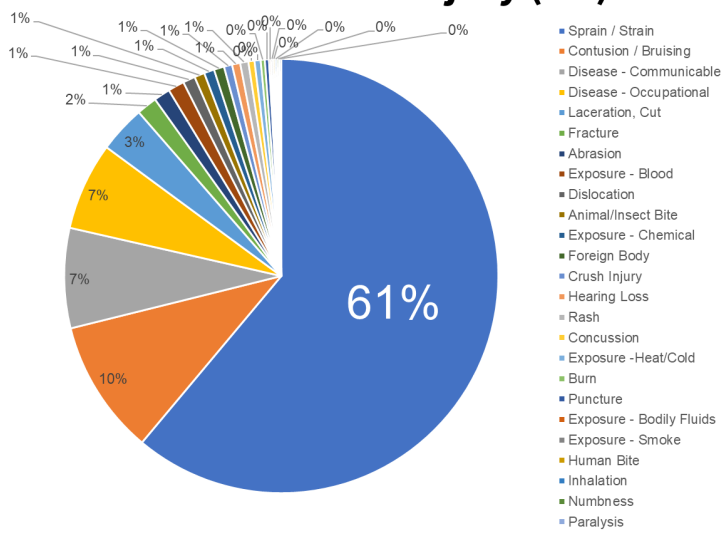
* Only includes departments with LTI Severity consistently greater than zero.

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 4 illustrates the most predominant injury that led to time loss in 2021 was strains and sprains, accounting for 61% of all lost time injuries.

Figure 4:
Nature of Lost Time Injury (LTI) 2021



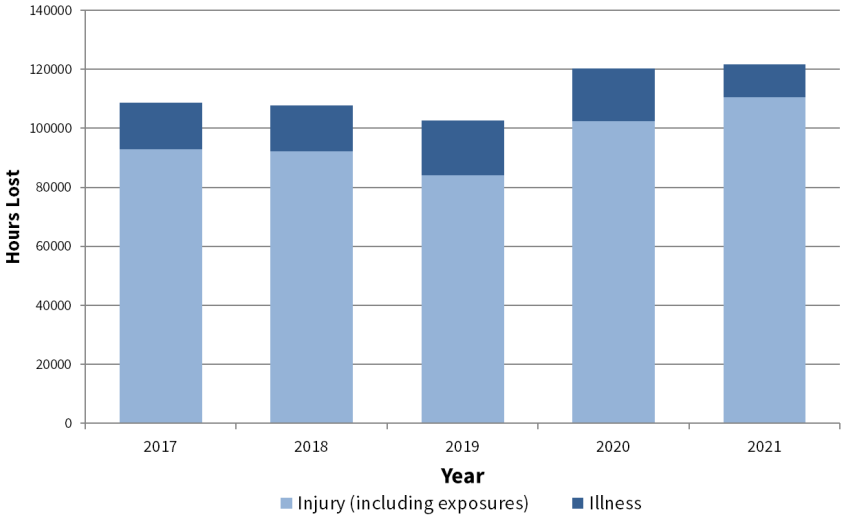
WCB TIME LOSS – INJURY VS. ILLNESS

WCB time loss for incidents reported as workplace illness are compared to workplace injury in Figure 5.

WCB claims reported as workplace illness are not included in LTI rates because they did not result in physical injury and/or are chronic in nature.

The impact of workplace illness on WCB time loss was less in 2021 compared with prior years during the reporting period.

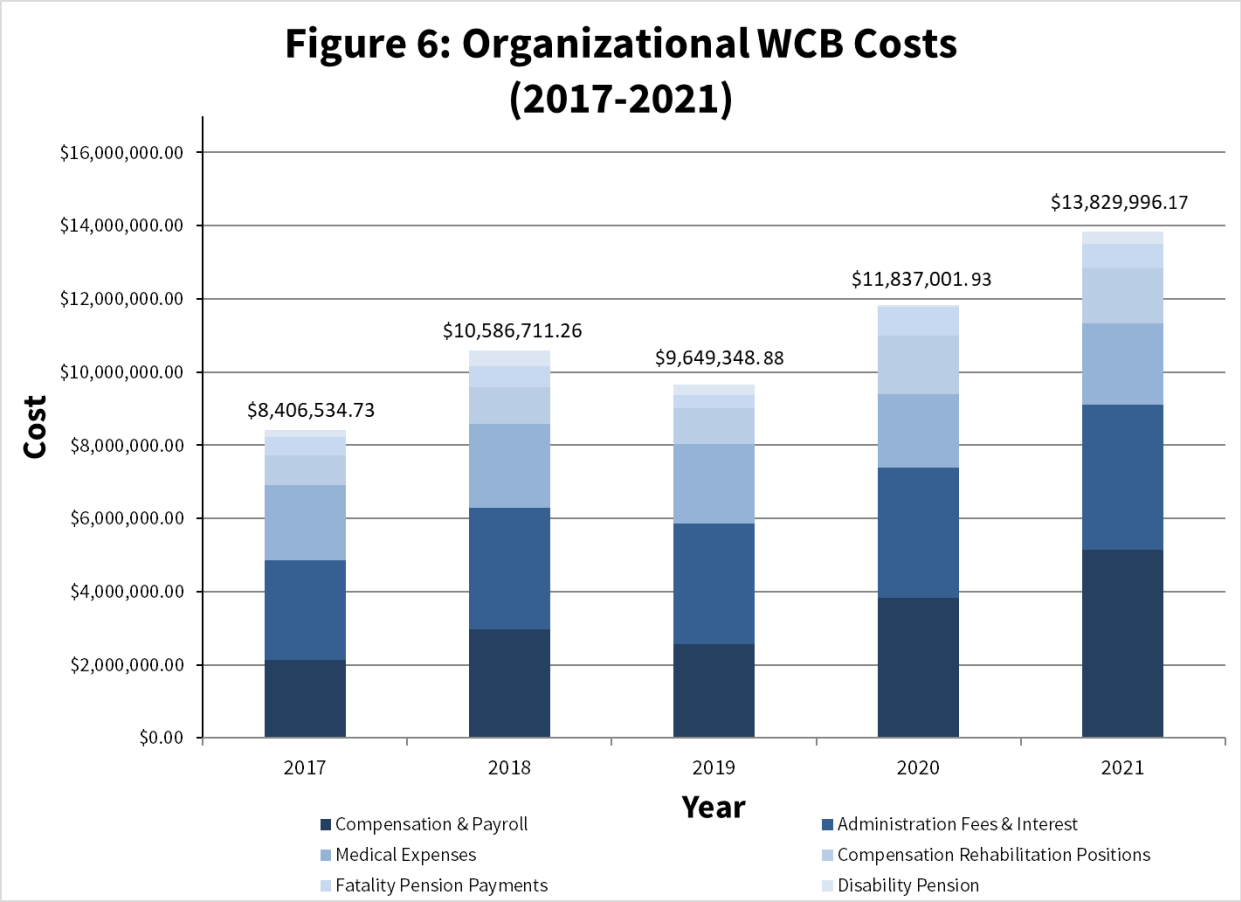
Figure 5: Organizational WCB Time Loss Injury vs. Illness



WORKERS COMPENSATION COSTS

Workers Compensation Board (WCB) related costs; compensation for direct hours lost, rehabilitation and WCB claim administration fees are tracked by the Corporate Finance Department.

See Appendix A for definitions of WCB cost categories.



WCB related costs were $13.8 million in 2021; higher than in 2020 ($11.8 million). Over half of WCB claim costs in 2021 resulted from prior year claims. A small number of claims from prior years contributed significantly (~$1 million) to fatality and permanent impairment awards. The City experienced a greater impact to higher paid positions in 2021 which increased compensation and payroll costs. COVID-19 claims directly accounted for $171k in WCB costs.

SAFE Work Certified

SAFE Work Certified is a voluntary standard for workplace safety and health launched by SAFE Work Manitoba in January 2017. The standard is built on three essential principles – leadership commitment, hazard control and worker participation. These principles are essential to achieving the City's goal of a workplace free of accidents, injuries and occupational illnesses.

The City is committed to becoming SAFE Work Certified, and has adopted a certification plan which is outlined in Administrative Standard HR-014 – SAFE Work Certified. The plan requires external audits of various departments over the next several years to ensure consistent application of effective safety and health management practices; leading to fewer injuries and illnesses for workers.

Achieving SAFE Work Certification is key to the City's safety and health strategy. Over the past four years, the Winnipeg Public Service has become one of the largest aggregates of SAFE Work Certified workplaces in Manitoba. In recent years many departments have achieved certification, including the Winnipeg Fleet Management Agency; the Community Services Department; a number of divisions in the Water and Waste Department; Winnipeg Transit; and the Planning, Property & Development Department. The Winnipeg Police Service achieved Safe Work Certification in November 2021; the Public Works Department received COR™ Certification in April 2022; and further work continues in other departments.

Conclusions

- The total number work-related injury and illness claims accepted by the WCB was 989 in 2021. This represents a 2% increase from 2020 (970) but was below average for the reporting period. The number of accepted Time Loss Claims in 2021 was 691 which was an increase of 7% from 2020 (647).

- Organizational Lost Time Injury (LTI) Frequency was 8.3 in 2021; higher than year end 2020 (8.2). Organizational LTI Severity was 1450 in 2021; higher than year end 2020 (1348). Increase in LTI Severity was mainly related to hours lost from prior year injury.

- The majority of LTI in 2021 were strains/sprains (61%) most commonly caused by falls/slips/trips and overexertion.

- WCB related costs were $13.8 million in 2021; higher than in 2020 ($11.8 million). Over half of WCB claim costs in 2021 resulted from prior year claims. A small number of claims from prior years contributed significantly (~$1 million) to fatality and permanent impairment awards. The City experienced a greater impact to higher paid positions in 2021 which increased compensation and payroll costs. COVID-19 claims directly accounted for $171k in WCB costs.

- Achieving SAFE Work Certification is key to the City's safety and health strategy. Over the past four years, the Winnipeg Public Service has become one of the largest aggregates of SAFE Work Certified workplaces in Manitoba. In recent years we've certified the Winnipeg Fleet Management Agency; the Community Services Department; a number of divisions in the Water and Waste Department; Winnipeg Transit; and the Planning, Property & Development Department. The Winnipeg Police Service achieved Safe Work Certification in November 2021;

the Public Works Department received COR™ Certification in April 2022; and further work continues in other departments.

- The COVID 19 pandemic had an impact on the organization in 2021. COVID-19 claims represent approximately 6% of the total WCB claims in 2021. For a COVID-19 claim to be accepted, the WCB must determine that the virus was contracted as a result of an exposure arising out of and in the course of employment. We continue to focus on protecting City staff.

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).