

Corporate Report

REPORT NUMBER 150-2023-City Manager's Office-Human Resources & Corporate Safety

DATE

PREPARED

April 11, 2023

FILE

MEETING DATE

April 24, 2023

SUBJECT

2022 Corporate Safety Annual Review Report

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report provides an overview of the activities and initiatives undertaken in 2022 by the Human Resources & Corporate Safety Division.

The Corporate Safety Section is mandated to establish a safety program, act as a resource and provide oversight of the safety program for all City departments, excluding the Thunder Bay Police Service and the outside boards and agencies of the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay (CTB).

DISCUSSION

2022 Corporate Safety Accomplishment Summary

- Asbestos, silica and respirator awareness training complete with respirator fit testing for 18 staff in work functions that would have exposures;
- An additional 70 plus respirator fit tests were completed for staff that were not related to asbestos or silica exposures;
- Investigated two critical injuries and three major incidents;
- Returned to in person corporate training with two sessions of the Competent Supervisor;
- Acquired Indoor Air Quality Meter to facilitate quick response to concerns;
- Safety Management System (SMS) audits completed on Elements 005 (Incident Investigation) and 007 (Health and Safety Communication), gap analysis completed on Element 003 (Training, Awareness, and Competence) and 006 (Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans);

Corporate Report 150-2023-City Manager's Office-Human Resources & Corporate Safety

- Recruited and trained new Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Claims Analyst;
- Strengthen internal Hearing Conservation Program through the purchase of an audiometer and training a Safety Specialist to conduct in house hearing assessments.

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

There are no amendments to the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness Policy suggested this year.

Safety Management System (SMS) Implementation

A total of 48 internal audits were completed over the span of six months in 2022. A team of 13 volunteer auditors joined Corporate Safety staff to complete the audits.

The internal audits included audits of SMS Manual Element 005 – Incident Investigation and Element 007 – Health and Safety Communication, and a gap analysis of Element 003 – Training, Awareness, and Competence and Element 006 – Emergency Preparedness and Response. SMS Audit Final Reports were prepared for each Divisional Management Team.

The average compliance rate across the Corporation was 84.3% for Elements 005 and 007. The results of the audits indicated that items related to legislative compliance are well established and generally well communicated. Opportunities for improvement were related to internal processes to be reviewed for improvement.

The average score across the Corporation for the gap analysis of Elements 003 and 006 was 70.3%. The gap analysis is intended to identify areas for improvement and is used as an action plan to demonstrate improvement in the audits. Broadly the findings revealed that documentation of training and emergency response drills needs to improve.

The 2023 audit will include Elements 003, 006 and 011 – Corrective Action Reporting. Gap analyses for Elements 002 - Legal and Other Requirements, 004 - Hazard Analysis and 010 - Performance Measuring and Monitoring will be completed simultaneously with the 2023 audit.

Legislative and Standards Update

In 2022 the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) was amended to increase fines for officers and directors from \$100,000 to \$1.5 million and up to 12 months in jail, or both. Maximum penalties for workers and supervisors also increased from \$100,000 to \$500,000, in addition to up to 12 months in jail. The limitation period for instituting a prosecution under the OHSA has been extended from one year to two.

Corporate Report 150-2023-City Manager's Office-Human Resources & Corporate Safety

By March 1, 2023 employers with 25 or more employees must have a written policy on the electronic monitoring of employees. The City of Thunder Bay is compliant with Policy HR-05-36 Electronic Monitoring.

On June 1, 2023, workplaces that are at high risk for an employee to overdose will be required to provide naloxone kits in the workplace. Complying with this legislation may require the acquisition of kits, monitoring expiry dates, training of staff and establishing procedures for the workplace. Human Resources and Corporate Safety will assess the City of Thunder Bay's requirement to provide naloxone in the workplace with respect to the new legislation and develop a procedure.

Training and Communication

Corporate Safety resumed in-person training mid-year. The Competent Supervisor training was deferred through 2020 and 2021, resulting in a training backlog of supervisors and those who act in a supervisory capacity. Three sessions were conducted through Q3 2022 and Q1 2023, with sessions to continue in 2023 as required.

Training requirements of Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC) under the Occupational Health and Safety Act continued through the pandemic. Corporate Safety is working with supervisors to schedule training for member employees to ensure ongoing compliance with the OHSA.

Operational training is coordinated between departments to ensure the safety of staff, compliance, and cost savings. The following training can be offered, in-house, by Corporate Safety:

- Designated Substances (asbestos, lead, mercury, silica, etc)
- Supervisor Orientation – site specific (limited) and general
- Verbal De-escalation Techniques – CPI certified
- Intalex Software (workplace inspection module), and
- SafetyLine working alone application.

Ministry of Labour Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)

| Table 1: Number of MLITSD Field Visits Reports and Orders Received per Year | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Total Visits | 34 | 22 | 33 | 15 | 47 |
| Visits with Orders Issued | 10 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 10 |
| Number of Orders Issued | 27 | 20 | 8 | 13 | 17 |

Corporate Report 150-2023-City Manager's Office-Human Resources & Corporate Safety

- 25 visits were reactive visits due to the reporting of occupational illnesses (COVID-19, noise induced hearing loss, gastro illness, etc.);
- 12 were proactive visits by inspectors to various worksites; and
- 10 visits were follow-ups to reported critical incidents or complaints.

Orders received in 2022 generally required the City to provide additional or follow-up information after a reported event such as occupational illnesses, critical injuries, or complaint. For example, the Ministry may order noise dosimetry information to be provided when an occupational illness report for noise induced hearing loss is reported, or request that final investigation outcomes signed off by the JHSC and the employer be provided after a critical injury. All orders received were complied with in the required timelines.

Critical Injuries/Serious or Major Incidents

Two critical injuries were recorded in 2022, and both were staff injuries. One was a fractured wrist due to resident aggression at Pioneer Ridge and the other was a fractured foot that occurred during training at the Canada Games Complex. A summary of critical injuries annually over the last five years is included in Table 2.

| Table 2: Number of Critical Injuries per Year | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Year | # of Critical Injuries |
| 2018 | 10 |
| 2019 | 4 |
| 2020 | 4 |
| 2021 | 2 |
| 2022 | 2 |

Workplace Incident Statistics

Workplace incidents are reported by employees to City Supervisors and are recorded in the Parklane Online Incident Report (OLIR). Workplace incident reporting is encouraged and helps cultivate an environment of safety and support in the workplace. While only health care and lost time injuries are reportable to WSIB, the encouragement to report all incidents including first aid and near miss injuries improves the overall safety of employees. The incident reports are shared with management and the data is utilized to assist in hazard identification and to focus Corporate Safety efforts.

Workplace Incidents by Classification

Incidents are classified in four categories: Hazard, First Aid, Health Care, or Lost Time.

- Hazards - incidents where the situation or environment has the potential to cause injury (i.e. an employee slipped but caught themselves before falling). Hazards are also known as “near misses”.

Corporate Report 150-2023-City Manager's Office-Human Resources & Corporate Safety

- First Aid - incidents where an employee is injured but does not require formal medical aid from a health care practitioner (i.e. a scrape or cut that is bandaged in the workplace).
- Health Care - incidents where an employee requires medical aid from a health care practitioner (i.e. employee goes to hospital to evaluate strained knee). Health care incidents are reportable to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).
- Lost Time - incidents where an employee is injured and is required to be off work beyond the date of injury to recover. These injuries can range from muscle strains to mental stress. Lost time incidents are reportable to the WSIB.

A comparison of the total number of incidents based on classification over the last five years is summarized in Figure 1.

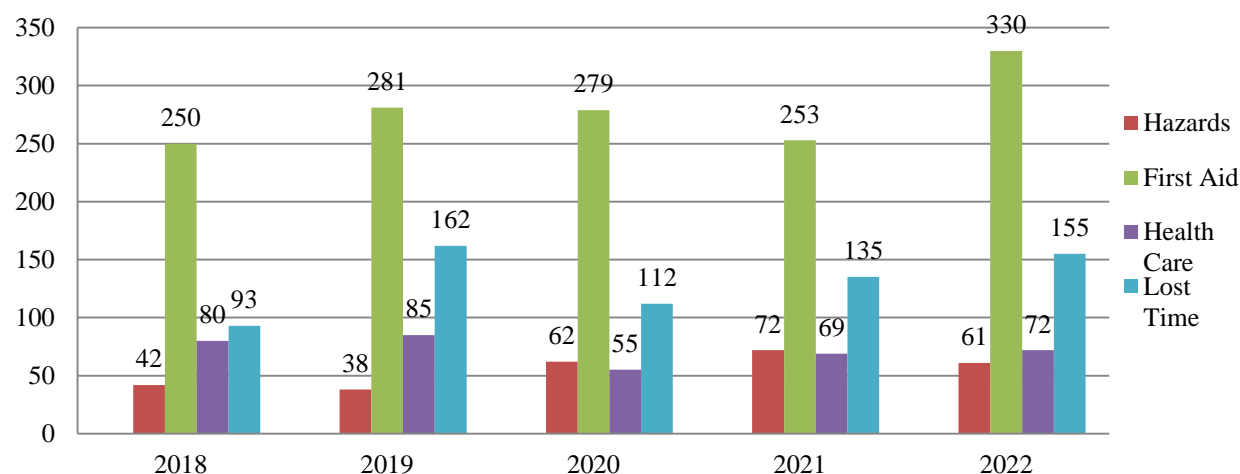


Figure 1: Total Incidents by Classification per Year

Note (1): The above incidents do not include Recurrent Claims, Denied Claims, Police or Outside Boards claims.

Note (2): numbers may fluctuate year over year based on WSIB activity such as claim approvals, denials, or appeals.

2022 saw a significant increase in reported first aid incidents attributed to stress exposures from several traumatic incidents that impacted several crews from Superior North Emergency Medical Services (SNEMS) and Thunder Bay Fire Rescue (TBFR) attending the same scenes.

Workplace Incident Totals by Type and Year

The top three incident types reported in 2022 were Exposure/Stress, Over Exertion/Strain and Exposure.

The category of Exposure/Stress is largely a result of exposure to situations that are traumatic or of a repetitive nature that may result in mental health impacts. Reported

Corporate Report 150-2023-City Manager's Office-Human Resources & Corporate Safety

incidents of exposure/stress continue to increase in EMS and Fire, however, it should be noted that not all reported incidents result in WSIB claims. Only health care and lost time injuries are reportable to WSIB, but employees are encouraged to report all incidents so that trends can be identified, and prevention efforts focused. Claim costs associated with mental health injuries are higher due to the length of the claim, the extent of recovery, and the claim management complexity related to mental health. Since 2015 claim costs for mental health incidents have significantly outpaced other injury claim costs. From 2015 to 2022, there were a reported 418 lost time claims related to Over Exertion/Strain (OES) with claim costs totaling \$2,640,860 while 204 Exposure/Stress claims during the same period had costs totaling \$13,553,656.

OES injuries are reported across the corporation and are the most common type of injury in Infrastructure and Operations due to the physical nature of this department's work. Other areas of the Corporation where OES injuries are high include Long Term Care from manoeuvring residents, and in Fire and EMS as a result of patient lifts or transfers in difficult or unpredictable conditions. Training on proper lifting and ergonomic positioning continues to be reinforced along with encouraging use of assistive lift devices or seeking assistance for lifts.

Exposure incidents cover a wide range of events. The increase in exposure incidents this year relative to prior years was largely related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and outbreaks at Pioneer Ridge and Jasper, as well as paramedic and firefighter exposures. In addition to COVID-19, this category of injury includes occupational cancer diagnoses, exposure to body fluids/needle stick injuries, bed bug bites, allergic reactions from allergens, and occupational noise induced hearing loss.

Figure 2 below summarizes the number of incidents by type over the past three years.

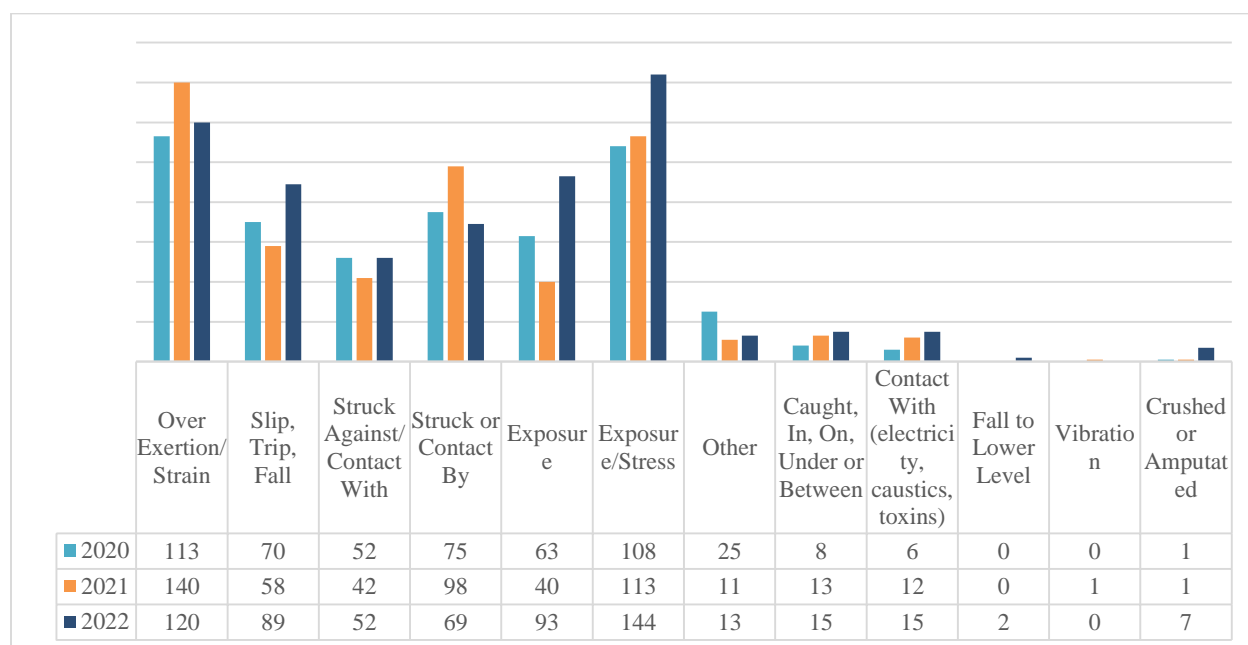


Figure 2: Incident Totals by Type and Year

Note: Incidents classified as “Other” are either incidents where there is not a direct workplace cause that could be identified by the Supervisor, or where the events are unusual and cannot be slotted within the standardized categories.

Workplace Violence

Incidents of violence directed at front line City staff, most commonly directed at transit drivers, paramedics and health care workers by passengers, patients or residents through the normal course of their work, is reported through the Parklane OLIR system.

Table 2 below summarizes the number of violent incidents reported through the Parklane OLIR system from 2019 to 2022 and includes both reportable injuries resulting in a WSIB claim and near miss/first aid. It is recognized that many incidents of a threatening, harassing or violent nature towards staff go unreported.

| Table 2: Incidents of Violence Reported Through Parklane OLIR | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| Department/Section | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| EMS (District) | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Transit | 9 | 10 | 11 | 9 |
| EMS (City) | 18 | 34 | 49 | 61 |
| Pioneer Ridge | 53 | 26 | 45 | 21 |

Note: some incidents did not result in incident but were classified as a near miss – a punch thrown that did not connect with an employee would fall into this classification.

In the fall of 2022, the Employee Safety Task Force was struck, with a goal of addressing, through prevention and supports, increasing levels of violence, vicarious trauma, and moral injury experienced by staff in the course of their work. The membership of the task force involves both management and front-line employees from SNEMS, Fire, Transit, Parks, and Licensing and Enforcement. The front-line staff from these areas report incidents of violence and feelings of burnout and helplessness specifically related to the social issues in the community. A facilitated workshop is scheduled with frontline staff and senior management from these areas to generate ideas and action items on how the City can better support and protect staff from incidents of violence and mental stress. It is expected that additional training will be a recommended action item.

The Ambassador training developed by the Canadian Urban Transit Association teaches appropriate responses when dealing with challenging situations that may assist in decreasing incidents of violence towards Transit Operators. Transit Administration continues to struggle with providing near full-service levels with Operator resources not being at full complement. Five full time and thirteen part-time Operator positions remained vacant as of December 2022. These vacancies continue to hinder the Division's ability to schedule staff off work to complete training without impacting service delivery. Regular and ongoing recruitment efforts are in place and will continue throughout 2023. Staffing levels are forecasted to recover by Q4 2023, which should allow training efforts to resume at that time.

EMS implemented the Scene Management and Response Tactics (SMART) training program in 2019. The program, developed by a paramedic with extensive tactical training, teaches threat mitigation and self-defence. The training provides practical tools for paramedics to avoid confrontation and protect themselves when a situation arises. Retraining on this important program will occur in 2023. Training on reporting and completing reports for incidents of violence committed against paramedics is implemented through Superior North EMS' Learning Management System (LMS).

Pioneer Ridge has seen a decrease in workplace injuries related to responsive behaviors exhibited by residents. Pioneer Ridge administration contributes this decrease to the positive outcomes of having embedded Behavioral Support Ontario (BSO) services. These embedded services have included an increase in education and knowledge related to emotional and behavioral support, regular BSO rounds and early intervention.

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)

Like most public sector organizations, the City of Thunder Bay is a Schedule 2 employer. Schedule 1 employers pay a premium under the collective liability insurance principle, while Schedule 2 employers are billed and pay actual benefits costs plus an administration fee to the WSIB. For both Schedule 1 & 2 employers, the WSIB maintains full authority over the claims entitlement process. The administration fee for Schedule 2 changes year over year based on the total claim costs for all Schedule 2 employers in the province. The administration fee calculation has an inverse relationship to claim costs. If the total provincial Schedule 2 claim costs increase, the administration fee is lowered. In the last five years, the WSIB Schedule 2 administration fee has continuously decreased. WSIB attributes this to the increase in mental stress claims across Schedule 2 employers. For 2023, WSIB has predicted a 18.3% administration rate.

| Year | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Admin Rate % | 27.11 | 22.33 | 22.07 | 24.06 | 20.70* |

* a provisional rate

Claim costs for Health Care and 102 Advances increased approximately 25% in 2022 compared to costs incurred in 2021 (Appendix 1). If a Schedule 2 employer provides benefits or advances to a worker, WSIB does not issue compensation cheques. Instead, the WSIB records all payments as a charge against the employer and notes that any compensation payments payable to the worker has been "covered by advances" from the employer. The employer is then credited for this amount. At the City of Thunder Bay, 102 Advances are limited to EMS, Fire, Traffic Control and Street Lighting (TCSL), and non-union employees. Depending on collective agreement language advances are paid on approved WSIB claims for up to two years which provides full earnings for the employees in these groups. There are very few injuries reported from the TCSL or non-union group of employees, and injuries that are incurred are physical injuries. The

increase in costs is attributed to mental stress injuries in EMS and Fire as the cost and duration of treatment for mental stress is longer and more expensive than physical injuries.

There was an increase in non-economic loss (NEL) decisions finalized by WSIB in 2022 resulting in higher costs in this area as well. Increased mental stress claims also has an impact on NEL awards. When an employee has been determined to have reached their maximum medical recovery (MMR) for an injury, a NEL is determined. When an employee is unable to return to their pre-injury position, which is often the case for those experiencing PTSD, the NEL award is higher as the overall impact of the injury on the employee's life is considered.

Claim costs for Exposure/Stress injuries represent more than half of the annual costs despite representing only 10% of the compensable injuries. Workers are off work longer for mental stress claims and have a much lower rate of success in returning to work to their pre-injury occupation. The Disability Management Coordinator works with WSIB on these complex injury cases to return injured workers to the workplace, but most often employees are unable to return to their pre-injury position. This requires identifying suitable positions within the corporation that align with the permanent restrictions but also taking into account training required, cross bargaining unit considerations, and the wage enhancements required to limit the corporation's liability.

Most accommodations currently undertaken are from UNIFOR (SNEMS) to positions elsewhere in the Corporation. The main challenges to the placement of SNEMS employees experiencing PTSD are psychological triggers, employment status (i.e. part-time employees) and the proximity of those employees who reside in the District. Due to psychological triggers, former paramedics are often unable to be placed in healthcare or other front-line settings that would optimize their transferrable skills and training resulting in them being underemployed elsewhere in the Corporation. Part-time employees unable to return to their pre-injury position are not expected to be accommodated into a full-time position and finding suitable part time employment within the Corporation is challenging, especially at a wage rate that would be close to that of a paramedic. The City of Thunder Bay does not have employment other than EMS outside of city limits and SNEMS employees unable to return to their preinjury employment are not obligated to move to Thunder Bay. In these cases, the City is required to retrain the individual for suitable employment that would result in compensation close to pre-injury wages within their home community.

In 2021 four employees were permanently accommodated in positions that were not in their pre-injury workplaces. In 2022 this increased to six and in 2023, four individuals have been permanently accommodated by the end of the first quarter.

Figures 3 and 4 below summarize the Mental Stress Claims by Year and the total WSIB Claim Costs. The data in figure 3 show the steady increase in mental stress claims over the last five years along with where those costs originate. Presumptive legislation

recognizing PTSD in first responders was introduced in 2016, while additional mental health illnesses (chronic and traumatic stress) were added in 2018.

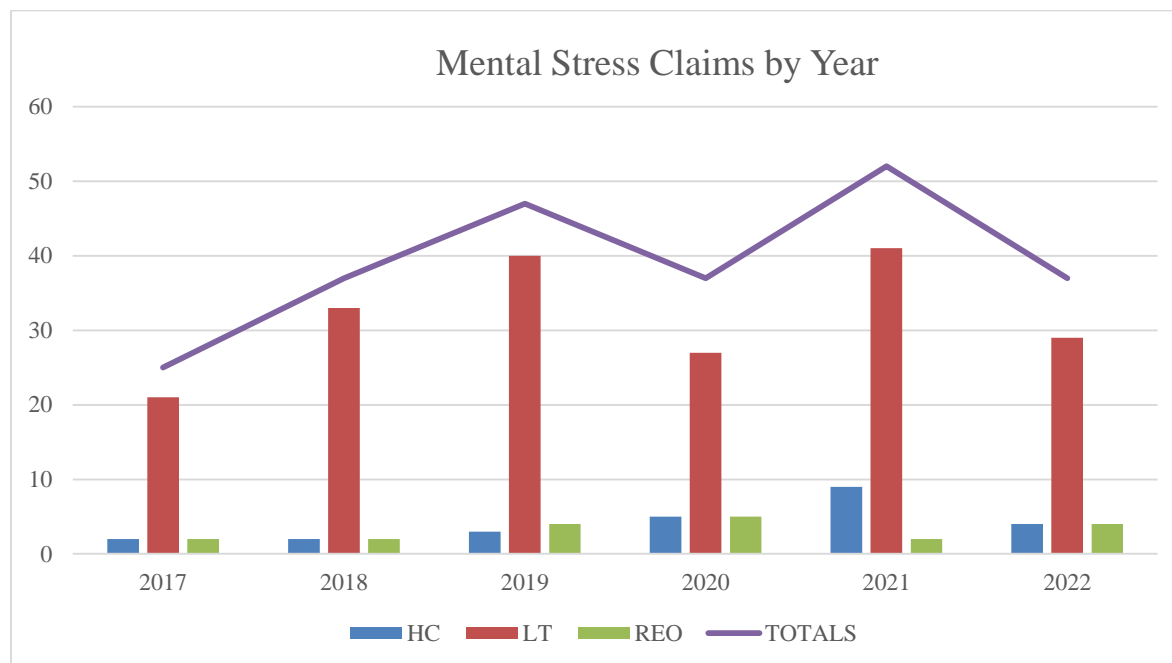


Figure 3: The number of mental stress claims per year by incident type (HC – Health Care, LT – Lost Time, REO – Reoccurring Injury).

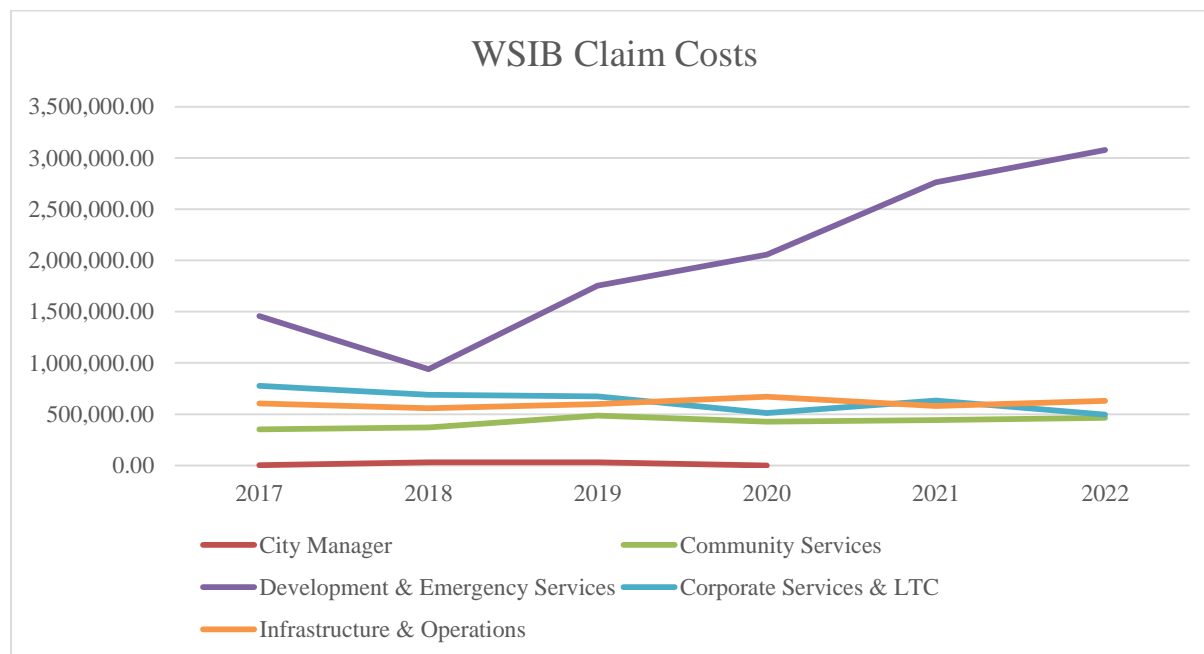


Figure 4: The total cost of approved claims per year by Department.

Corporate Safety 2023 Targets and Goals

In 2023 Corporate Safety's goals are to resume prevention activities that were halted during the pandemic and continue to review and enhance WSIB disability management processes.

Recommendations/Targets

1. Conduct audits of SMS Element 003 – Training Awareness and Competence and Element 006 – Emergency Preparedness and Response. *Person Responsible & Timeline: Safety Management System Coordinator, Q4 2023.*
2. Conduct gap analysis of SMS Element 002: Legal and Other Requirements, Element 004: Hazard Analysis, Element 010: Performance Measuring and Monitoring. *Person Responsible & Timeline: Safety Management System Coordinator, Q4 2023.*
3. Support CTB leaders to complete required SMS inspections. *Person Responsible & Timeline: Corporate Safety Manager, Safety Specialists and SMS Coordinator, ongoing throughout 2023.*
4. Resume hearing assessments for employees that work in high noise environments. *Person Responsible & Timeline: Safety Specialist, Q4 2023.*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the information in this report appropriately describes the events and activities associated with the Corporate Safety Section.

BACKGROUND

Each year the Corporate Safety Section reports to Council outlining the status of the safety program in the previous year and making recommendations for the ensuing year.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

Kerri Bernardi, Manager – Corporate Safety

REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY:

Norm Gale, City Manager

04/17/2023