

DECEMBER 2024 UPDATE

2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries STRATEGY



Work to live.



Work to live.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan is an injury prevention and workplace safety partnership between the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. Through the partnership, both agencies offer programs and support that help employers and workers develop workplace safety and health programs.

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Introduction

The WorkSafe Saskatchewan steering committee would like to thank all of the participants, labour, partners and safety leaders across Saskatchewan who have been actively working with WorkSafe Saskatchewan to advance the objectives of the 2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy.

As a result of the work being undertaken across this province by workers, employers and safety leaders, the province's Total injury rate decreased to 3.91 per 100 workers in 2024, a 1.01 per cent decrease from 2023. The 2024 Time Loss injury rate decreased to 1.72 per 100 workers or by 3.37 per cent from 2023.

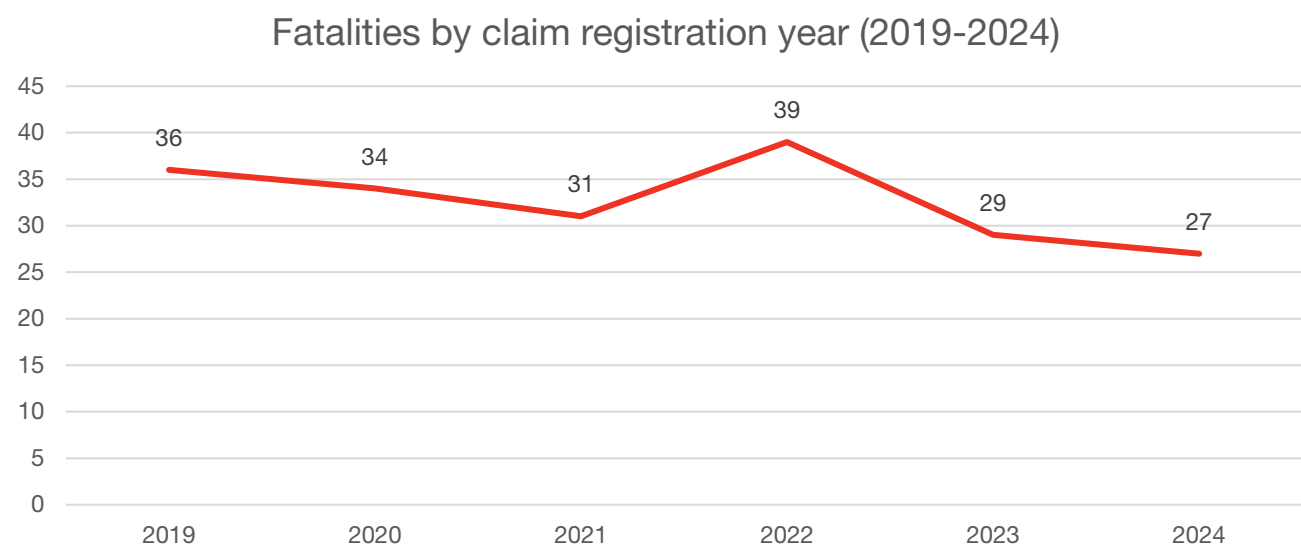
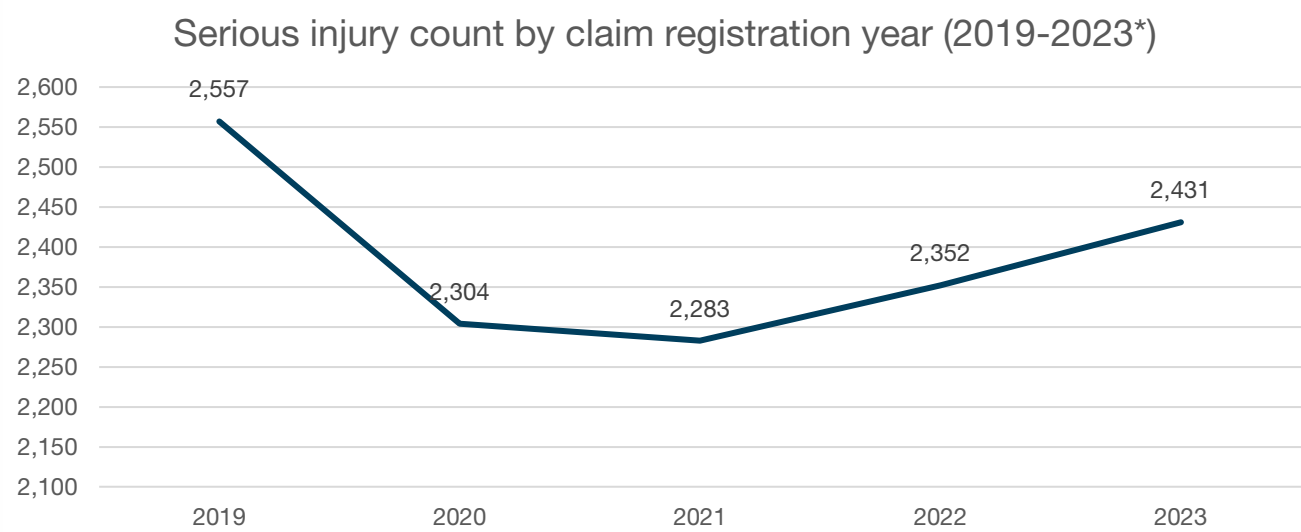
Our 2024 Total injury rate was the lowest in the province's recorded history. Since the WorkSafe Saskatchewan partnership was established in 2002 and since then, the Total injury rate has dropped by **more than 65 per cent**.

However, the number of serious injury claims in Saskatchewan remains steady at approximately 2,400 each year. Together, we must not rest until Saskatchewan has no workplace fatalities and the lowest injury rate in Canada.

Serious injuries account for approximately **11 to 15 per cent** of total claims in the province but account for roughly **80 per cent** of the costs in Saskatchewan's workers' compensation system each year.

This report outlines the progress that has taken place to bring our injury and fatality rates down and keep all workers safe on the job. Together, we CAN make Saskatchewan the safest place to work in Canada.

Serious injuries and fatalities



* 2023 is the most recent data available for serious injuries. Serious injuries are reported at a one-year lag period because it may take some time for claims to mature into serious injuries.

Three main workplace sectors and focus

For the 2023-2028 strategy, WorkSafe Saskatchewan is focusing on three main workplace sectors and common issues that will benefit all Saskatchewan workplaces.

Health care



Objective: Reduce serious injuries in the Saskatchewan health-care sector by 10 per cent by Dec. 31, 2028.

2024 update: Health care remains the province's industry with the most serious injuries, accounting for 581 serious injuries in 2023¹. This was a 13.92 per cent increase over 2022 and it represented 23.90 per cent of all serious injury claims in 2023. In 2024, rate code G22 represented 18.53 per cent of all accepted claims for the WCB.

In 2024, WorkSafe Saskatchewan continued to focus on collaborative consulting, supporting health-care employers in the completion of serious injury investigations and hazard assessments. The WCB partnered with the Saskatchewan Health Authority to address workplace violence. The WCB also partnered with a number of affiliates to address musculoskeletal injuries.

Transportation



Objective: Reduce serious injuries by 10 per cent in Saskatchewan's transportation sector by Dec. 31, 2028.

2024 update: : Transportation accounted for 135 serious injuries in 2023. This was a 18.18 per cent decrease from 2022 and it represented 5.55 per cent of all serious injury claims in 2023. In 2024, rate code T42 represented 4.02 per cent of all accepted claims for the WCB.

In 2024, the transportation learning collaborative collected data and discussed potential corrective actions to test as part of the learning collaborative process. Data from RCMP, the WCB and SGI confirmed the need to focus on driver risk awareness and intersections. The group is working to implement a driver safety assessment to help identify strengths and risks and suggest customized training. This work will continue in 2025.

Construction



Objective: Reduce injuries due to falls by 30 per cent in Saskatchewan's construction industry by Dec. 31, 2028.

2024 update: Construction accounted for 227 serious injuries in 2023. This was an 8.10 per cent increase over 2022 and it represented 9.33 per cent of all serious injury claims in 2023. In 2024, rate codes B11, B12 and B13 represented 9.34 per cent of all accepted claims for the WCB.

The area of focus for the learning collaborative is on falls from ladders. The data shows a high number of injuries are occurring with workers in their first year of employment. The learning collaborative has developed a ladder assessment tool which is being tested in the field. Results of the experiment will be shared in the June 2025 update.

¹ 2023 is the most recent data available for serious injuries. Serious injuries are reported at a one-year lag period because it may take some time for claims to mature into serious injuries.

Common issues affecting most Saskatchewan workplaces

Despite the unique risks and hazards present across different rate codes, many of the root causes contributing to serious injuries and fatalities in Saskatchewan workplaces are strikingly similar. The following issues represent persistent barriers to making Saskatchewan the safest place to work in Canada.

Common issues affecting most Saskatchewan workplaces

December 2024 update



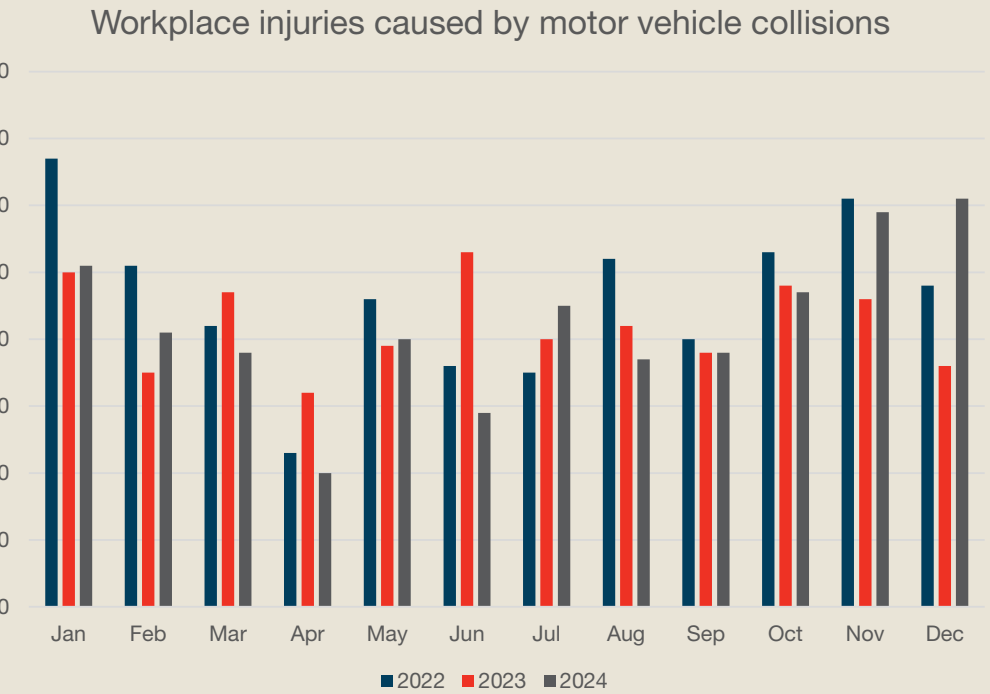
Motor vehicle crashes



Dec. 31, 2024 update: Motor vehicle crashes increased to 504 in 2024 from 499 in 2023.

The learning collaborative continued to meet regularly to discuss appropriate safety improvements to implement in an effort to reduce the risk of motor vehicle crashes.

After a period of data analysis, the collaborative selected a driving risk assessment to experiment with employers in transportation. This assessment is designed to help provide insights into an individual's strengths and areas of risk that are relevant to the workplace so specific controls (including individualized training) can be implemented to reduce the risk of a motor vehicle crash.



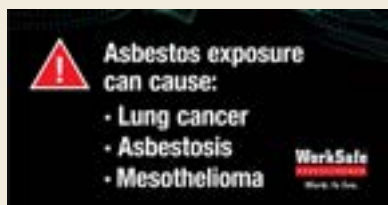
Upcoming work: Implement the driver safety assessment and measure the results. Continue to work with industry partners, employers and safety associations to generate an early reporting document that will help in identifying precursors to incidents in efforts to identify controls and corrective actions prior to a motor vehicle crash.

Common issues affecting most Saskatchewan workplaces

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Asbestos



Dec. 31, 2024 update: Fatalities due to asbestos exposure decreased to four in 2024 from five in 2023.

The occupational health and safety for asbestos workers training standard outlines the minimum training requirements necessary for the WCB to approve a training provider's program.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan is working with two additional training providers to meet the requirements of the asbestos training standard. In 2024, 11 training sessions were held and 63 workers were trained under the program.

Please visit the worksafe.ca website for free resources and training on asbestos awareness.

In 2024, the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) branch received 493 high-risk asbestos notifications and completed 211 asbestos-related worksite visits, issuing 69 contraventions. The top six contraventions issued on asbestos-related worksite visits were:

Regulation number	Description	Total
OHS Reg 23-8	Asbestos processes	16
OHS Reg 7-3	Respiratory protective devices	13
OHS Reg 23-5	Identification of asbestos-containing materials	5
Act 3-22	Establishment of committees	5
OHS Reg 5-8	First aid register	3
OHS Reg 4-4	Frequency of meetings	3

Upcoming work: WorkSafe Saskatchewan will continue to promote the asbestos training standard to training providers across the province to ensure that workers who may be exposed to asbestos on the worksite receive high-quality and consistent safety and health training. The occupational disease program will be finalized early 2025.



Falls

Dec. 31, 2024 update: Total injuries due to falls increased to 2,888 in 2024 from 2,682 in 2023.

Within the construction industry, falls from ladders were the leading cause of falls to level from 2019 to 2023. In 2024, falls from ladders resulted in 6.01 per cent of all injuries by fall to level.

The learning collaborative established to address falls from ladders in the construction industry worked throughout 2024 to uncover the root causes of falls from ladders.

Since the June 2024 update, worksite visits continued into September. Through these visits, WorkSafe Saskatchewan learned about some common themes related to the potential root causes of the incidents. Having a ladder placed incorrectly and not having it properly secured were the two highest contributing factors followed by lack of hazard awareness and lack of prejob planning.

Site findings on potential root causes of falls from ladders 2024



The learning collaborative members came together after the site visits were complete to analyze the data and to collaborate on change ideas to test in the field. An on-site ladder assessment tool to address the lack of hazard awareness and pre-job planning was developed. .

In 2024, the OHS branch completed 1,288 worksite visits in the construction industry, issuing 1,070 contraventions and wrote 49 summary offence tickets in the construction sector (B11, B12 and B13 rate codes). The top five contraventions issued were:

Regulation number	Description	Total
OHS Reg 9-2	Protective against falling	203
OHS Reg 7-6	Protective headwear	151
OHS Reg 9-3	Fall protection plan	101
OHS Reg 3-6	Supervision of work	56
OHS Reg 7-11	Footwear	54

Common issues affecting most Saskatchewan workplaces

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The OHS branch also completed 580 worksite visits to residential construction (B12) employer locations, issuing 514 contraventions to these employers. The top five contraventions issued were:

Regulation number	Description	Total
OHS Reg 9-2	Protective against falling	105
OHS Reg 7-6	Protective headwear	70
OHS Reg 9-3	Fall protection plan	55
OHS Reg 7-11	Footwear	27
OHS Reg 3-6	Supervision of work	22

Outside of the construction sector, the OHS branch also issued an additional 68 contraventions for Reg 9-2 and additional 38 contraventions for Reg 9-3.

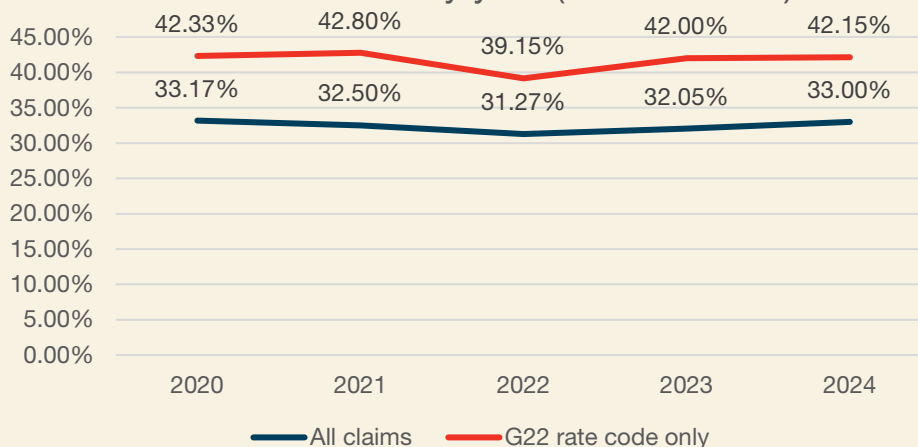
Upcoming work: The collaborative team will test the ladder assessment tool in the field, develop additional countermeasures to enhance awareness of the injury trend, evaluate the tool's effectiveness and implement necessary improvements.



Industrial ergonomics (Musculoskeletal injuries)

Dec. 31, 2024 update: Musculoskeletal and bodily reaction injuries increased to 5,718 in 2024 from 5,174 in 2023. This represents 33 per cent of all WCB claims in 2024. In 2024, this was the top cause of injuries in health care in Saskatchewan, accounting for 42.15 per cent of all claims in the G22 rate code.

Percentage of claims that were bodily reaction claims by year (2020 to 2024)



In 2023, bodily reaction accounted for 31.94 per cent of all WCB claims and 40.39 per cent of serious injuries.

In 2024, the WCB formed two learning collaboratives with two long-term care facilities focused on implementing disposable soaker pads. The goal is to eliminate worker use of soaker pads as repositioning devices with additional benefits, including the reduction of resident urinary tract infections and skin and pressure injuries. To date, the experiment has found success. However, it is difficult to determine if the recent reduction in incidents is the result of:

- The introduction of disposable soaker pads,
- Increased communication around the consequences of using soaker pads as repositioning devices, or
- A combination of both.

The WCB account manager will monitor facility injury data and follow up with the two facilities to confirm that the control remains effective.

In August 2024, WorkSafe Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Association for Safe Workplaces in Health collaborated to bring Dr. Michelle Cardoso from the University of Moncton and Dr. Wayne Albert from the University of New Brunswick to Saskatchewan. They provided a research presentation on enhancing health-care worker safety, improving patient care and increasing workplace efficiency with VENDLET V5S technology. This technology is a patient transfer aid for moving and handling patients or clients in bed, and it allows health-care staff to easily reposition and turn the client in bed with pushing or pulling. The research strongly suggests the use of patient handling training combined with VENDLET V5S technology could reduce the potential of a musculoskeletal injury from occurring. Research and development efforts are underway to bring this technology to Saskatchewan in 2026.

A learning collaborative has been formed to support the adoption of VENDLET V5S technology in Saskatchewan. The first meeting was on Dec. 2, 2024.

Also in 2024, the WCB began work on a research project with the University of Moncton, the University of New Brunswick and the University of Saskatchewan. The project will study the physical task demands of health-care providers working in long-term care. The research team is looking to acquire data from 30 Saskatoon clinical care aides working full-time hours and supporting residents with a minimum level three classification. Data collection will include:

- recording of the total time spent on specific motor tasks during an eight-hour shift;
- questionnaires to gather information on the worker's lifestyle habits, work-related injury history, perceptions of job-related physical demands and levels of discomfort during the workday; and
- a heart rate monitor worn by the worker for the entirety of an eight-hour shift.

Data gathered from this study will support the implementation of safety controls within the health-care industry.

Common issues affecting most Saskatchewan workplaces

December 2024 update

In 2024, the OHS branch completed 546 worksite visits relating to ergonomics, issuing 146 contraventions. The top nine contraventions issued were:

Regulation number	Description	Total
OHS Reg 4-4	Frequency of meetings	22
OHS Reg 4-9	Training of representatives, committees	13
OHS Reg 6-18	Musculoskeletal injuries	13
OHS Reg 5-7	First aid station	6
OHS Reg 21-12	Eye flushing equipment	6
OHS Reg 5-8	First aid register	6
Act 3-27	Duties of committees	6
Act 3-22	Establishment of committees	6
OHS Reg 4-5	Minutes	6

Upcoming work: WorkSafe Saskatchewan will support the implementation of countermeasures to reduce musculoskeletal injuries. The WCB will progress the work of the Vendlet collaborative with the goal of bringing Vendlet beds into Saskatchewan in 2026. The WCB's communications team is developing a campaign targeted at ergonomics in health care in 2025.



Machinery

Dec. 31, 2024 update: The WCB visited 23 employers to provide education and awareness on the guarding scale and associated resources.



The guard safety scale assessment is a comprehensive evaluation designed to assess compliance with CSA standard Z432-16 and the effectiveness of guarding systems on machinery. When used correctly, the guard safety scale will ensure that the guard or barrier is designed and adjusted correctly to protect the worker from incidental contact with a mechanical hazard. For more information, visit worksafesask.ca/prevention/safeguarding-machinery-and-equipment.



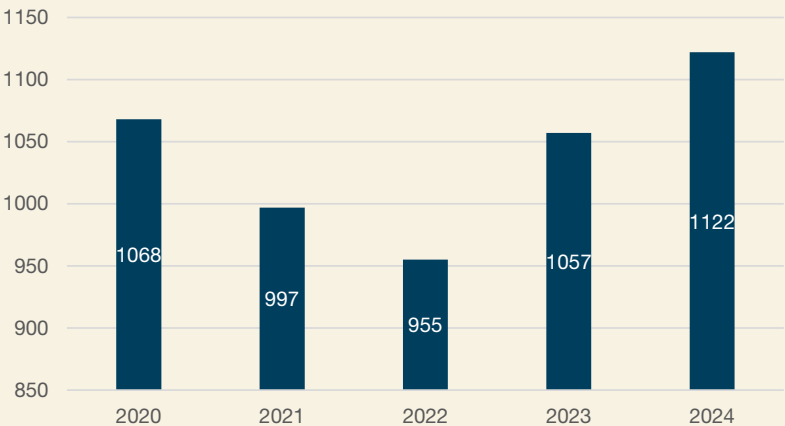
Violence

Dec. 31, 2024 update: Claims due to incidents of violence increased to 1,122 in 2024 from 1,057 in 2023.

As of May 17, 2024, all employers in Saskatchewan are required to have a violence policy. Prior to this, only prescribed places of employment were subject to this part of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

Within the S2104 rate code (aid societies, rehabilitation services, social services, home support services, community services, community associations, independent living programs and counselling services), assaults, violent acts, attacks and harassment were the leading cause of violent injury from 2019 to 2024. WorkSafe Saskatchewan continues to lead a learning collaborative with a focus on reducing injuries relating to interventions and improving safety for all in a caregiving environment.

Claims due to violence (2020 to 2024)



The WCB continued to participate as an advisory member of the violence prevention advisory group to support the Saskatchewan Health Authority with their violence prevention initiatives.

The WCB also continued to meet with transit operations to support their implementation plan for violence prevention. The committee collaborated with community partners to discuss potential support with incident trending and deterring violence in hot spot areas. Violence prevention training is being reviewed for improvements.

In 2024, the OHS branch completed 1,113 worksite visits where violence policy was discussed, issuing 168 contraventions. The only two contraventions issued were:

Regulation number	Description	Total
OHS Reg 3-26	Violence policy	85
Act 3-21	Duty re policy statement on violence and prevention plan	83

Upcoming work: The social support services learning collaborative will engage front-line workers, research evidence-based approaches and implement safety measures to reduce the risk of incidents of violence in the workplace.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan will continue to partner with transit services to implement safety measures and reduce the risk of incidents of violence.

Common issues affecting most Saskatchewan workplaces

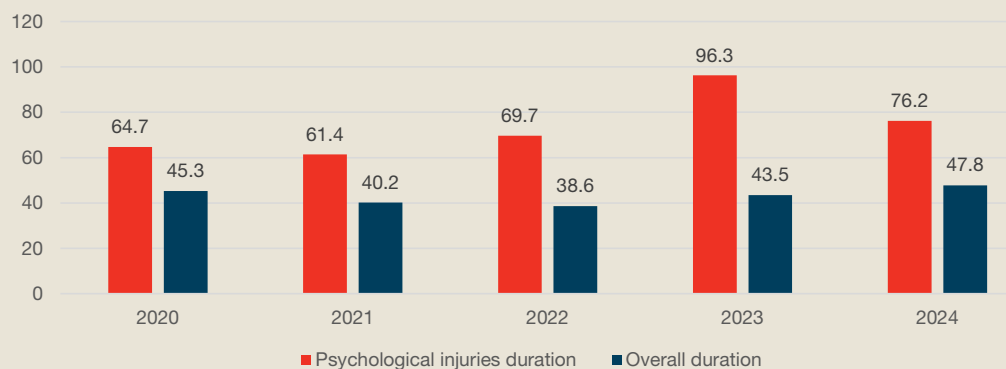
December 2024 update



Psychological health

Dec. 31, 2024 update: Psychological injury claims have continued to increase over the last three years. In addition, psychological injury claim durations are higher than overall claim durations.

Psychological injury durations versus overall durations (days)¹



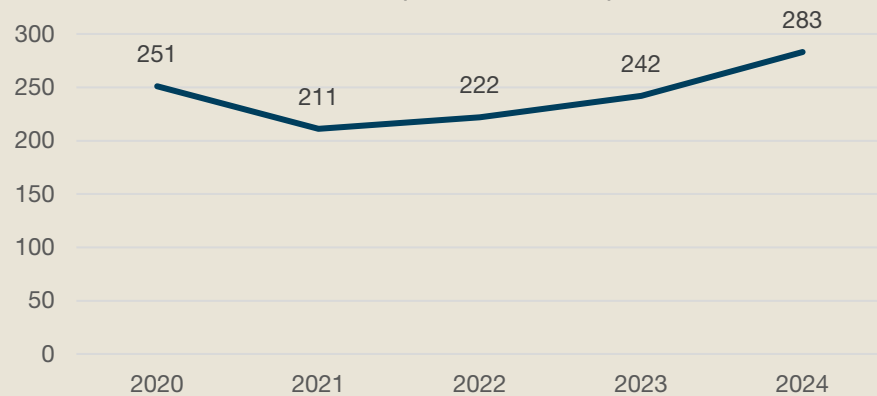
The first psychological health and safety learning collaborative (for first responders) launched in February 2024. The immense challenges first responders face with their psychological health and well-being are a direct result of their work and service to communities and are therefore society's collective responsibility. Exposures to potentially psychologically traumatic events are unavoidable occupational stressors that, alongside other occupational stressors, cause substantial harms.

"Psychological health support strategies must shift towards tools, policies and practices that mitigate the impacts of traumatic exposures and other stressors on public safety personnel's mental health," said Dr. R. Nicholas Carleton, professor of psychology and lead researcher of the Psychological Trauma and Stress Systems Lab. "Our research has evidenced that the online tools and resources we are offering are effective in helping with safeguarding and improving the psychological health of public safety personnel and reducing the impacts of traumatic exposures."

The group is experimenting with an app through a partnership with the University of Regina to offer daily and monthly self-monitoring tools to protect the psychological health of first responders. This will provide a system that offers near real-time supports to help manage occupational stress and psychological health challenges.

¹The relatively small number of psychological injuries means that durations can be volatile and affected by longer periods of disability on only a few claims. Psychological and other serious injuries have a much higher likelihood of resulting in long periods of time loss than the majority of cases and have a disproportionate impact on the overall duration of claims.

Accepted psychological health and safety claims (2020 - 2024)*



The WCB launched its new psychological health and safety consulting model for employers to support the integration of psychological safety within their existing safety management system. The WCB also started a community of practice in construction and expanded it to include organizations from all industries in 2024.

The psychological health and safety community of practice met quarterly through 2024. In Q3 2024, the WCB's prevention team launched a project to operationalize the learnings from the construction psychological health and safety community of practice to provide these services in all industries. Work is ongoing to reach employers to provide resources, services and assistance to integrate psychological health and safety into existing safety management systems.

Upcoming work: The self-monitoring app will be implemented with interested parties in 2025 and will be assessed for effectiveness.

The community of practice will be open to all employers in Saskatchewan. WCB account managers will continue to reach out to employers to raise awareness and engage employers in participating in the community of practice or the WCB's psychological health and safety consulting support.

* Psychological health and safety claims include primary psychological injury accepted claims and exclude claims for self-insured employers.

New initiatives

In 2024, the WCB initiated new programs and processes to support the 2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy.

New WorkSafe Saskatchewan initiatives	December 2024 update
New worker safety program - a provincial approach	There were two youth fatalities in 2024, which is an increase from zero in 2022 and 2023. The youth Total injury rate increased to 5.1 per cent in 2024 from 4.28 in 2023. WorkSafe Saskatchewan has a long history of providing injury prevention to young workers (under the age of 25) through a variety of strategic initiatives. This work will continue and expand to include workers new to Saskatchewan workplaces as they share similar risks. In 2024, a committee was formed consisting of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, Saskatchewan Safety Council, six safety associations and other experts to collaborate and identify opportunities that will provide support to workers, employers and education partners. Collaboration between these organizations will bring together partners to share insights on effective initiatives to protect workers who may be at greater risk of injury due to their workplace characteristics. This will also allow the group to identify efficiencies and support each other with current and future initiatives without duplicating efforts. Alignment will help with effective injury prevention. The first meeting will be held in Q1 2025.
New WCB processes, resources and tools	
	In partnership with the National Safety Council and local industry partners, the WCB completed the development of a serious incident and fatality prevention model, including tools and processes that will be used to support individual employers to reduce serious injuries and fatalities. The WCB expanded the approved training provider program to include three new standards for Occupational Health Committee Level 1, Level 2 and Supervision and Safety, as well as adding several new training providers to expand access for employers to these courses. The priority employer program, which helps focus prevention resources and activities with specific employers and has been in existence for more than 20 years, was evaluated using third-party research professionals to determine the effectiveness of the program. The evaluation found the program to be effective in reducing injury rates with targeted employers. 25 employers have been selected for the priority employer program for 2025. In collaboration with the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety as part of the WorkSafe Saskatchewan partnership, a revitalization project was initiated to consider refreshing the WorkSafe Saskatchewan brand and related campaigns.

Performance measures and targets

The WorkSafe Saskatchewan working group will provide quarterly updates on the knowledge transfer and strategy deployment to the steering committee.

Twice a year, WorkSafe Saskatchewan will report publicly on the success of the strategy by posting information at worksafesask.ca.

Performance measure	December 2024 update
Decrease in Total injury rate.	As of Dec. 31, 2024, the Total injury rate was 3.91 per 100 workers, a 1.01 per cent decrease from the 2023 Total injury rate of 3.95 per 100 workers. This is the lowest in the province's recorded history for the second year in a row.
Decrease in fatalities.	There was a decrease to 27 work-related fatalities in 2024 from 29 in 2023.
Decrease in serious injuries.	As of Dec. 31, 2023¹, the total number of registered serious injuries was 2,431, which represents a 3.36 per cent increase over 2,352 serious injuries in 2022. This result does not meet the province's annual injury reduction target of five per cent and emphasizes the importance of working together to successfully implement the fatalities and serious injuries strategy. In 2024, the WCB's prevention department contacted 1,662 employers to offer support with serious injuries, psychological health and safety, and return to work resources. The prevention team conducted 85 serious injury investigations with Saskatchewan employers, identified 198 root causes and provided support.
Ongoing inspections and risk-based enforcement actions in high-risk sectors.	WorkSafe Saskatchewan continued working with priority employers who were identified based on their injury profile. Priority employers receive increased focus from the OHS branch, the WCB and, if applicable, their funded safety associations to assess their safety systems, receive training and improve their safety performance. At the end of 2024, 66 employers were involved in the priority employer program, with 14 graduating out of the program over the course of the year. The WCB reviews employers annually to determine if they meet the criteria for the program. The program criteria includes employers who have five or more serious injuries in the last two years, as well as a higher than industry Total injury rate or Time Loss rate in one or both of those previous two years.

¹ 2023 is the most recent data available for serious injuries. Serious injuries are reported at a one-year lag period because it may take some time for claims to mature into serious injuries.

Performance measure	December 2024 update
Ongoing inspections and risk-based enforcement actions in high-risk sectors.	In addition to working with the WCB through the WorkSafe Saskatchewan partnership to administer the priority employer program, the OHS branch also conducts other targeted work through its directed worksite visit program and targeted field campaigns. Directed employers, like priority employers, are selected based on their injury profiles. The OHS branch completes targeted field worksite visits annually, so the specific focus changes from year to year. They are often focused on high-risk industries such as construction and health care, type of work such as asbestos removal or type of injury such as musculoskeletal. In total, OHS officers conducted 169 worksite visits at priority employer locations in 2024. In addition, officers conducted 1,617 directed and 937 targeted field campaign worksite visits for a total of 2,723 targeted worksite visits in 2024.

New program

Occupational disease prevention program

A collaborative approach with WorkSafe Saskatchewan

In 2024, the WCB began to develop a new occupational disease prevention program. To ensure activities aligned with industry partners, a committee was formed that included participants from the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, WCB-funded safety associations, industry partners in mining, construction and health care, and individuals with expertise in occupational disease and industrial hygiene. The purpose of the committee is to determine the current and emerging occupational disease risks facing Saskatchewan workplaces and to develop definitive actions for addressing these

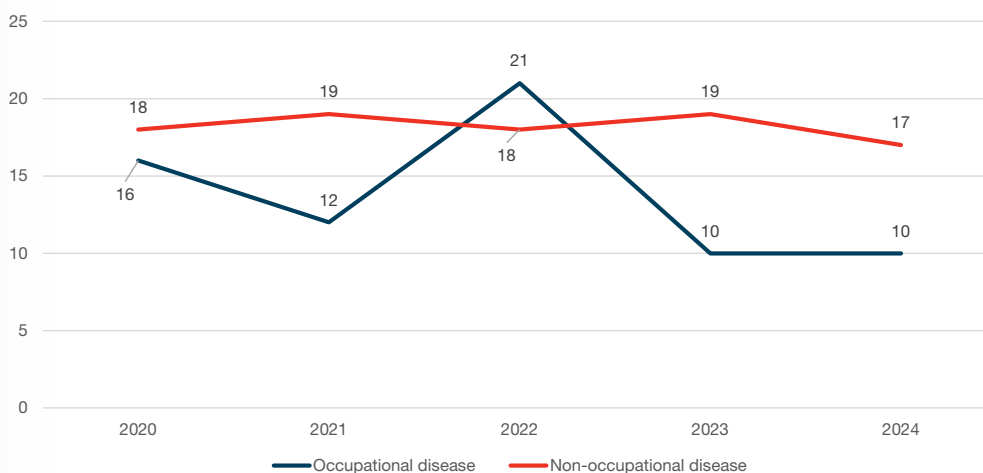
issues in a formally documented program. The actions for each of the four identified hazards will be implemented using the WorkSafe Saskatchewan five-pillar approach starting in 2025.

The committee met several times over the course of 2024, utilizing primary literature and industry expertise to narrow the focus of the new program to four key areas:

- silica exposure (primarily in construction)
- reproductive chemical hazards
- chemical exposure for facilities and maintenance workers
- welding fumes exposure

In addition to identifying these four new areas of focus, the occupational disease program will also address existing priorities, including firefighter cancer prevention, wildfire smoke exposure prevention and asbestos exposure prevention. The program document will be drafted in early 2025 and the implementation of determined actions will begin immediately after.

Occupational disease vs. non-occupational disease fatalities (2020-2024)



Participant feedback

“

We treat you after you already have cancer. Well, why not prevent firefighters from getting it in the first place?

”

Strengthening firefighter safety

The community of practice in Saskatchewan

In the high-risk world of firefighting, health and safety are constant priorities. The WorkSafe Saskatchewan firefighter community of practice is playing a crucial role in addressing the risks firefighters face, particularly when it comes to occupational cancer. Deputy Chief Rob Hogan of the Saskatoon Fire Department is a key figure in this initiative, which brings together front-line firefighters, the Saskatchewan Professional Firefighters Association and WCB representatives to share knowledge and develop strategies to protect firefighters from job-related illnesses.

The initiative gained momentum when Hogan, who had previously worked on a psychological health community of practice for first responders, recognized the need for a similar effort focused on cancer prevention.

“I said we should be doing something like this for cancer and firefighters. WCB loves communities of practice, so off we went,” he explains.

The community of practice is designed to foster collaboration among firefighters across different jurisdictions, from Saskatoon and Regina to Winnipeg and beyond.

“It’s almost like a big brainstorming session that hopefully comes up with some ideas that can be passed along to the wider firefighting population,” says Hogan.

The goal is to gather and implement best practices in cancer prevention and overall firefighter well-being.

One of the primary concerns for firefighters is the risk of developing

cancer due to exposure to harmful chemicals and byproducts of combustion. Presumptive legislation in Saskatchewan acknowledges the link between firefighting and 22 types of cancer, providing coverage for affected firefighters. However, Hogan emphasizes that prevention should be the priority.

“Presumptive legislation is totally reactionary,” he states. “We treat you after you already have cancer. Well, why not prevent firefighters from getting it in the first place?”

To combat this risk, the Saskatoon Fire Department has implemented an innovative exposure reduction program that includes a specialized trailer deployed to fire scenes.

“When crews come out of a fire, they go through a wash-down process - either wet or dry, depending on the season. Their gear is bagged, they use special wipes to clean themselves and then they change into clean clothes before heading back to the station,” Hogan describes.

Once back, firefighters immediately shower, and their gear is taken to a special washing machine where it is laundered.

“We’re trying to minimize their exposure to contaminants as quickly as possible,” says Hogan.

Firefighter safety practices have evolved significantly over the years, but changing a deeply ingrained culture takes time.

“When I started 34 years ago, the senior guys didn’t wear SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) because they didn’t think it was necessary,” Hogan recalls. “Over



Initially, the department provided a basic cleaning kit - a bucket of soapy water and a brush.

“

Catching cancer early can make all the difference.

”

The introduction of the exposure reduction trailer has been a turning point.



time, that changed. The same shift is happening now with exposure reduction.”

Initially, the department provided a basic cleaning kit — a bucket of soapy water and a brush — but compliance was low. The introduction of the exposure reduction trailer marked a turning point.

“It took us two years to get buy-in, but now it’s part of our standard procedure,” Hogan says. “The first thing we do when firefighters return from a fire is send them to shower. It’s a complete flip from how things used to be done.”

While the community of practice has made significant strides, Hogan sees room for growth. Expanding outreach to smaller, rural fire departments is a priority, as they often lack the resources of larger city departments. Additionally, he believes the next evolution should focus on proactive health screenings.

“Why wouldn’t we have legislation that says at 10 years on the job, firefighters get these medical tests and at 15 years, they get additional

screenings?” he suggests. “Catching cancer early can make all the difference.”

Research partnerships are also on the horizon. The Saskatoon Fire Department has partnered with the University of Saskatchewan to study per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), a group of human-made chemicals found in firefighting foams as well as thousands of other products, to better understand exposure risks.

“We know it’s there, but we don’t know how much,” Hogan says. “This research will help shape the next generation of firefighter safety protocols.” The federal government has proposed eliminating the use of PFAS in firefighting foams by 2027.

As firefighting continues to evolve, so too must the strategies to keep firefighters safe. The firefighter community of practice is leading the way in ensuring that those who risk their lives for others receive the protection they deserve.

“Every occupation has its dangers, and this is a hidden danger,” Hogan says. “But by working together, we can make a real difference.”



Partner program



“

Front line workers
understand the nuances
of work.

”

Moving beyond compliance

WorkSafe Saskatchewan and the National Safety Council set to pilot serious incident and fatality model

WorkSafe Saskatchewan and the National Safety Council are set to pilot a serious incident and fatality model with up to 10 employers in 2025. This includes companies in mining, construction, oil and gas, manufacturing and municipal sectors, where workers are regularly exposed to high-energy hazards. The goal is to test and refine the model, ensuring it meets the needs of Saskatchewan's diverse industries before a broader rollout.

As part of its renewed focus to make Saskatchewan the safest place to work in Canada, WorkSafe Saskatchewan is pursuing this initiative in a direct response to the need for a more structured and risk-based approach to workplace safety, ensuring that businesses of all sizes can better understand and mitigate the factors leading to serious injuries and fatalities.

In May 2023, SaskPower was enlisted to help refine and test a new serious incident and fatality model. This collaboration expanded to involve multiple working sessions aimed at developing practical tools and strategies tailored to the needs of Saskatchewan employers.

The serious incident and fatality prevention model is built around the plan-do-check-act framework, a continuous improvement cycle that helps organizations enhance their safety practices. The model integrates human and organizational principles, which focus on understanding and mitigating risks at their core.

The four primary steps of the model include:

- 1. Ensure leadership commitment and organizational readiness.**
Gain buy in from company leadership to drive safety culture improvements.
- 2. Understand and analyze serious incident and fatality risk.** Identify the most significant hazards that could lead to severe injuries or fatalities.
- 3. Implement and verify controls.**
Establish effective preventive measures and continuously assessing their effectiveness.
- 4. Continuous improvement.**
Encourage organizations to refine their safety strategies based on real world application and feedback.

Currently, there are at least 15 tools supporting the model. In addition, a full guide to understanding and implementing the model is currently being developed to give employers the option to take on this challenge themselves or with the support of the WCB's health and safety consultants.

This model is designed to be simple, adaptable and scalable, allowing both large and small businesses to implement it effectively. Additionally, it encourages industry-specific customization, acknowledging that different sectors face distinct safety challenges.

A key insight from the partnership is the need for simplified safety tools for small businesses.

“

The project was instrumental in supporting SaskPower on our journey towards a serious incident and fatality reduction program.

”



Lori Guasta of the National Safety Council and WCB's Daran Good.

“Many safety frameworks are designed with large corporations in mind, making them difficult for smaller organizations to adopt,” says Lori Guasta, interim vice-president of consulting and assessments at the National Safety Council.

To address this, the partners are developing a streamlined roadmap that offers straightforward, actionable guidance for small employers with limited resources.

“Small companies across any industry or sector can benefit from a simple but structured approach to understanding their risk profile and to put critical controls in place to prevent serious incidents and fatalities,” says Guasta.

The consulting model used in this initiative ensures that companies can receive hands-on support in implementing the serious incident and fatality framework. WCB's health and safety consultants have been trained to guide employers through the process, with the National Safety Council providing ongoing expertise and resources.

One of the fundamental principles of the serious incident and fatality prevention model is to help businesses move beyond mere compliance with safety regulations.

“Any model is only as good as it is utilized. By proactively assessing and mitigating risks, companies can create a safer, more engaged workplace while also reducing costs associated with workplace injuries,” says Daran Good, manager of prevention services at WCB. The model promotes frontline worker engagement, ensuring that employees are actively involved in safety discussions and decision-making processes.

“Front-line workers understand the

nuances of work,” Guasta says. “They know the challenges and often the solutions to working safely and productively.”

Guasta says employers who adopt this model early will gain a competitive advantage by demonstrating leadership in workplace safety and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Engaging employees at all levels and embedding safety into everyday operations will lead to long-term benefits, including enhanced morale, improved productivity and reduced injury rates.

“The serious incident and fatality reduction project helped us learn and explore tools and methods required to reduce serious incidents and fatalities at our organization,” says Nidal Dabghi, director of safety at SaskPower. “The project was instrumental in supporting SaskPower on our journey towards a serious incident and fatality reduction program.”

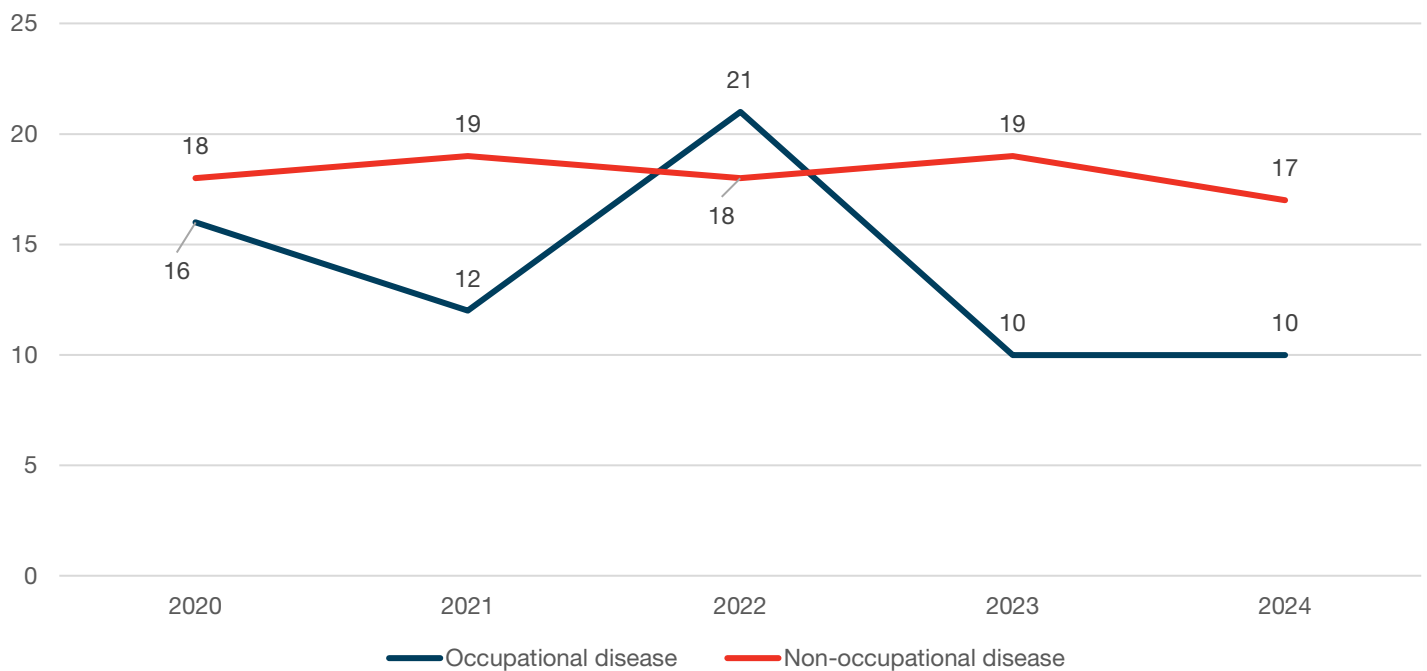
Looking ahead, there is potential for the model to be expanded beyond Saskatchewan, with other provinces and industries showing interest in adopting a similar framework.

The collaboration between WorkSafe Saskatchewan and the National Safety Council marks a significant step toward reducing serious workplace injuries and fatalities. By leveraging research-driven strategies, fostering industry partnerships and prioritizing continuous improvement, this initiative is poised to make a lasting impact on workplace safety across the province. As employers begin to adopt the serious incident and fatality model, the long-term vision of making Saskatchewan the safest place to work in Canada moves closer to reality.

APPENDIX A

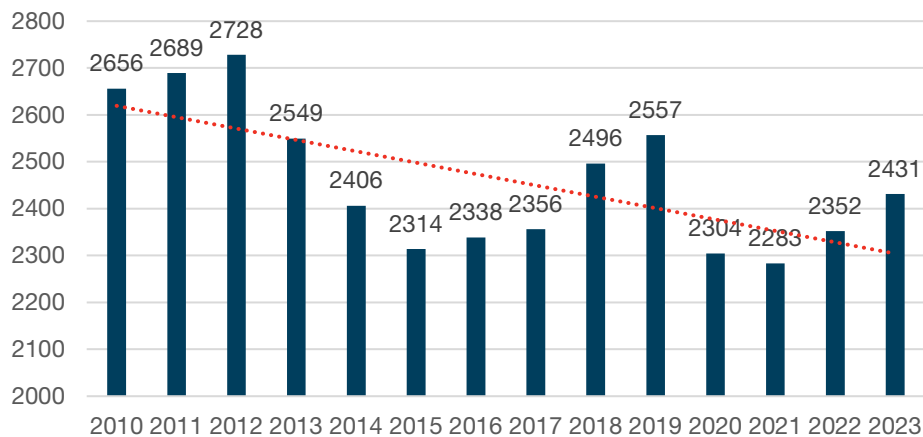
Saskatchewan workplace injury data

Occupational disease vs. non-occupational disease fatalities (2020-2024)



Saskatchewan workplace injury data

Serious injury count by claim registration year (2010 to 2023)



A serious injury is defined as a claim meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- The claim is a fatality.
- The claim has 50 or more compensation days paid (full or partial).
- The claim includes a permanent functional impairment of 10 per cent or more.
- The claim is a primary psychological/mental health claim.
- The claim has a Ministry of Labour Relations Workplace Safety referral flag. The injuries reported shall be within the parameters of Section 2-2 of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*. The types of injuries the WCB reports to the Minister may include, but are not limited to:

- o fracture (skull, spine, pelvis, femur, humerus, fibula, tibia, radius or ulna)
- o head injury
- o neck injury
- o serious eye injury
- o amputation or near amputations

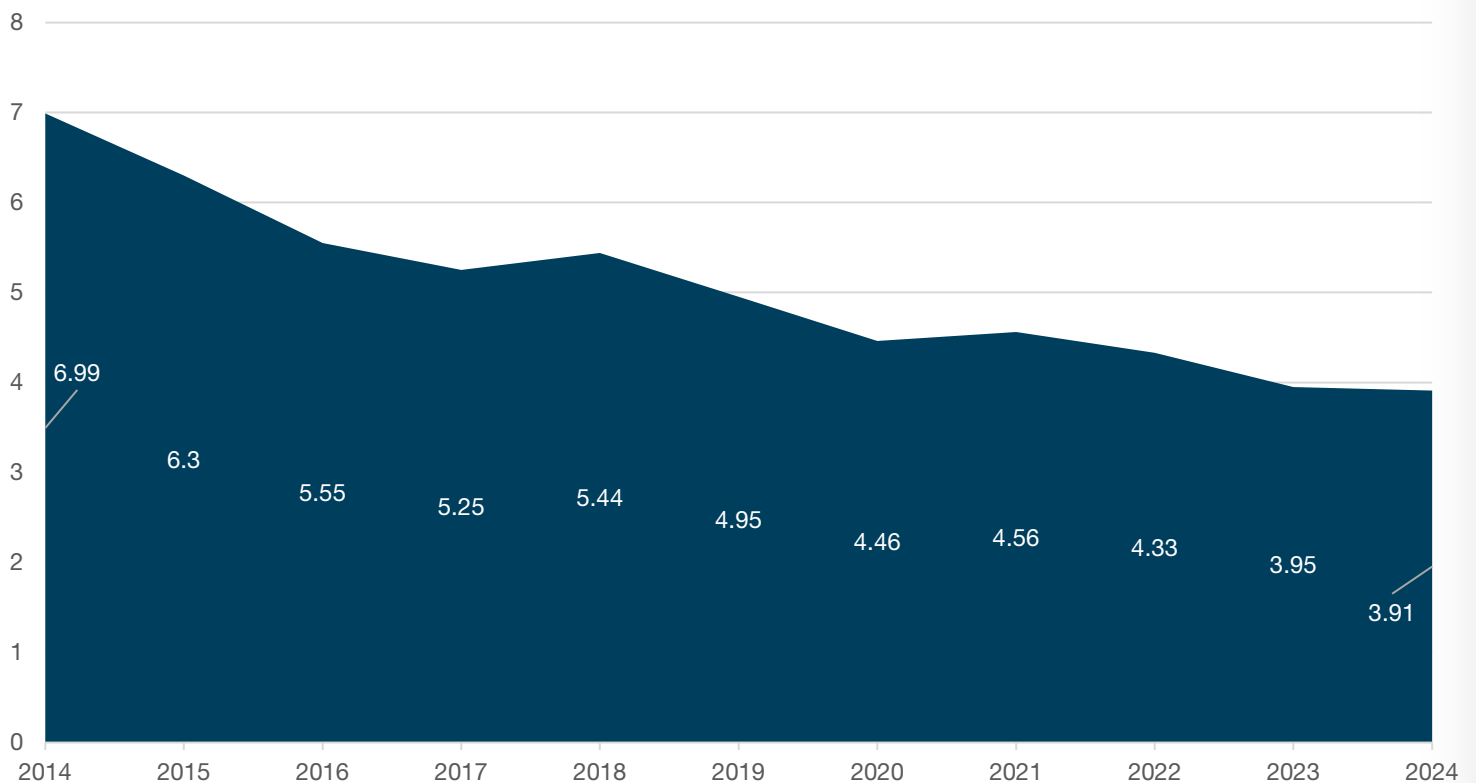
- o wound to the torso
- o electrical burn
- o third-degree burn
- o exposure to radiation
- o injury causing internal hemorrhage
- o injury caused by an explosion (directly or indirectly)
- o asphyxiation
- o poisoning and serious toxic effects from exposure to chemicals
- o severe infection (HIV, HBV, HCV or tuberculosis)

If one or more of the above criteria is satisfied, a claim will be referred to as a serious injury claim within the scope of the 2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy. This new and expanded definition has been laid over traditional data, indicators and validated lines of thought. It also indicated new areas of focus and better indicators for targeting, awareness and education, partnership and enforcement/inspection activities.

¹ 2023 is the most recent data available for serious injuries. Serious injuries are reported at a one-year lag period because it may take some time for claims to mature into serious injuries.

Saskatchewan workplace injury data

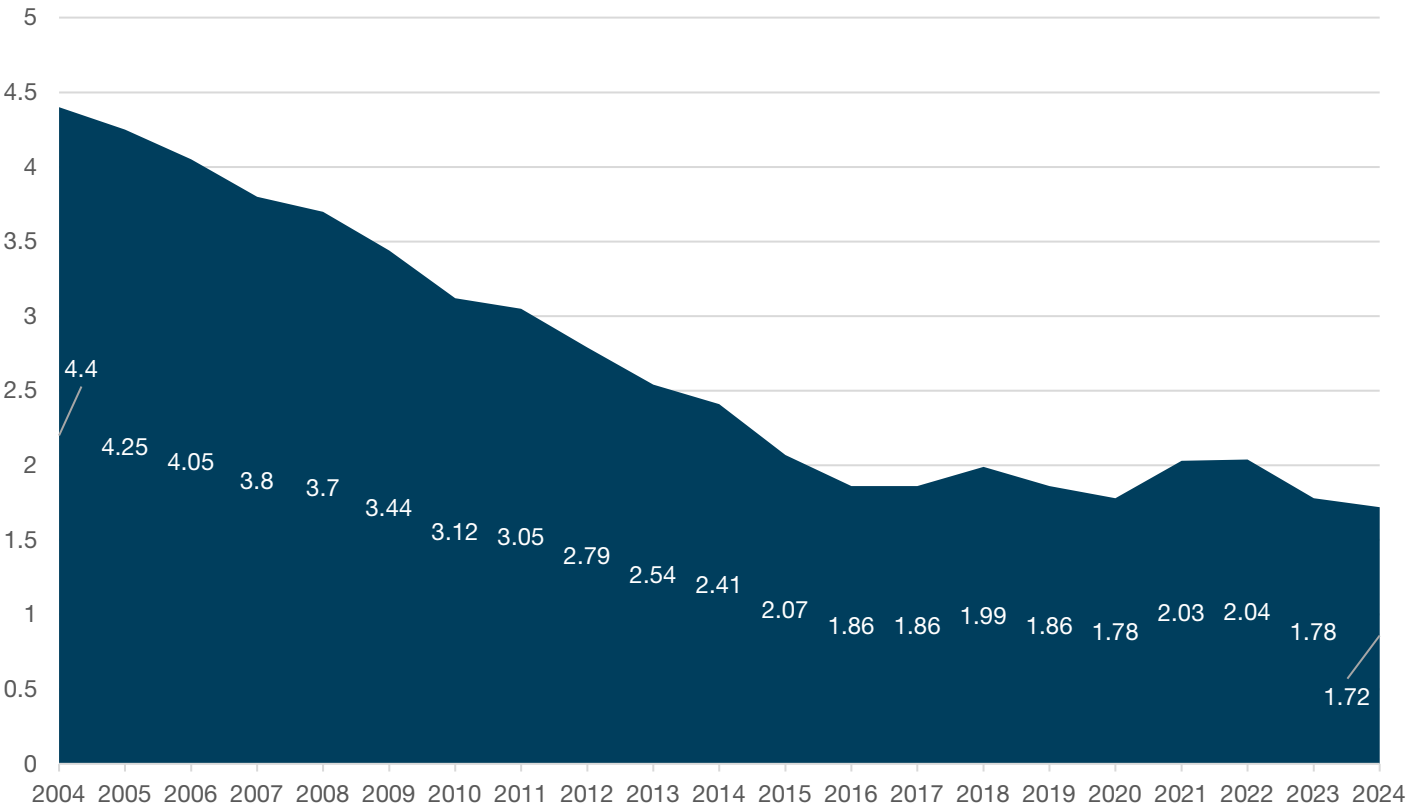
Total injury rate (per 100 workers)
(2014-2024)



The Total injury rate includes accepted No Time Loss (no time off work), Time Loss (time off work) and fatality claims.

Saskatchewan workplace injury data

Time Loss injury rate (per 100 workers)
(2004-2024)



A time loss claim is when a worker misses work because of a work-related injury. The Time Loss injury rate definition includes Time Loss and fatalities.

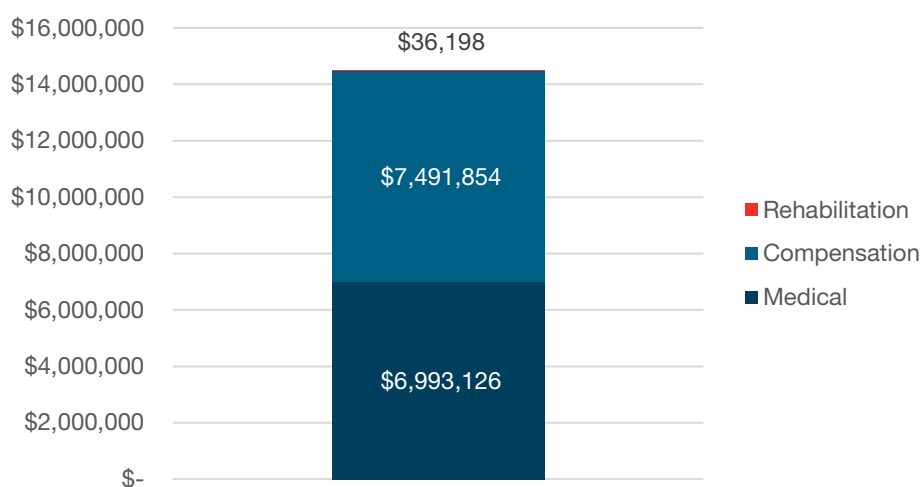
Health Authority Hospitals Care Homes

Rate code G22: 2024 injury stats at a glance



In 2024, the top occupation with injuries was nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates with **812 injuries**. The number two occupation with injuries was registered nurses with **278 injuries**.

Claim costs for G22 in 2024



In 2024, the G22 rate code was the top rate code with injuries.

3,212
injury claims
accepted





In 2024, the average claim duration for G22 was **41.88** days

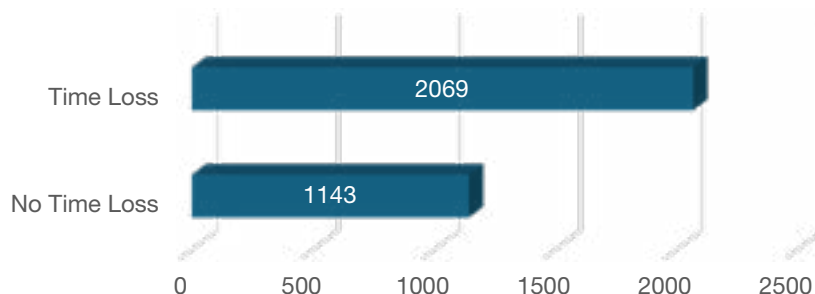
Top cause of injury

1,354

injuries were caused by
bodily reaction and exertion

77,818
days were lost to injury in 2024

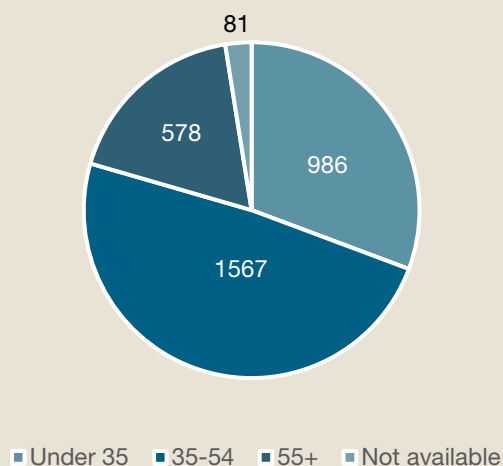
Number of injury claims for G22 in 2024



2024 by the numbers for G22

(Health Authority, Hospitals and Care Homes)

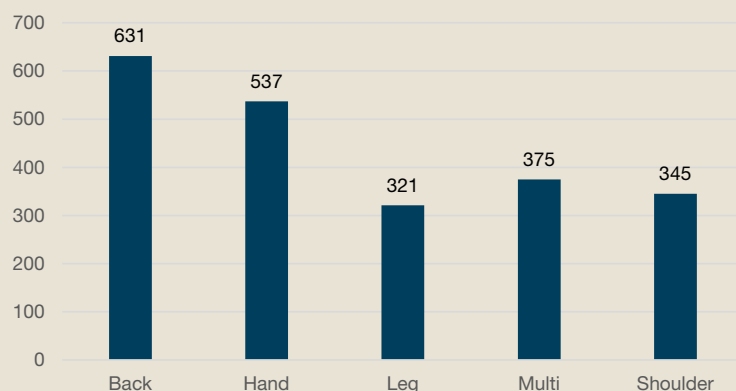
Age of injured person



83.66%

of injured workers in the G22 rate code were female.

Top five claims by body part







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