

STAFF REPORT

TO: Executive Committee **MEETING:** November 5, 2019

FROM: Andrew Brooks **FILE:** Not applicable
Manager of Employee Health,
Safety and Wellness

SUBJECT: Occupational Health and Safety Report

RECOMMENDATION

That the Occupational Health and Safety Report dated August 22, 2019 be received for information.

SUMMARY

This 2019 January to June Occupational Health and Safety Report summarizes the employee injury statistics within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN).

Although employee injuries are trending to be slightly higher in 2019 to date, WorkSafe BC (WSBC) time loss claims are showing a slight reduction in 2019. The RDN overall WSBC assessments are trending downward by a projected \$8,706 in 2019.

An effective Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHSP) that complies with WSBC requirements has been developed. Six Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committees meet monthly to promote injury prevention and monthly safety themes are issued.

An Attendance Management Program has been launched to support employees who frequently access sick time.

BACKGROUND

In 2017/2018, several gaps in health and safety policies and process were identified as a result of enforcement activity from WorkSafeBC (WSBC). As an example, the RDN had only one Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, whereas the WSBC requirement was 6 Committees across the RDN. As well, the Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHSP) was deficient in several elements and lacked adequate written material to address safe work procedures.

To address the above-noted requirements and ensure proper risk management, the Board approved the creation of a Manager of Employee Health, Safety and Wellness position in the 2018 budget. This position is shared with the Town of Qualicum Beach for 20 percent of the time (1 day per week).

The attached Occupational Health and Safety Report for the period of January to June 2019 was prepared in July and distributed to managers.

The total number of reported employee injuries has been increasing: 2019 to date (33), 2018 (54), 2017 (50). Employees are encouraged to report all injuries, no matter how minor, and this has resulted in an increase of first aid only injuries. First aid only injuries do not result in a WSBC claim and therefore provide a proactive opportunity to improve health and safety before a serious injury. Injury reporting to managers and JOHS Committees, coupled with trend identification, is resulting in specific injury prevention initiatives that include:

- Transit and Emergency Services – driver seat adjustment guide; transit trainers trained in ergonomics and body posture; violence prevention risk assessments; noise measurements;
- Solid Waste – review, update and develop safe work procedures; promotion of 3-foot bubble awareness; biogas risk assessment and development of control and response procedures; air (dust and asbestos) monitoring;
- Water and Wastewater Services – Working Alone reporting and checking process; updated Exposure Control Plans; confined space entry; and
- Administration Building – threat notification enhancements and response protocols;

The number of injuries that resulted in a WSBC time loss claim are: 2019 to date (12), 2018 (23), 2017 (21). The number of days lost for WSBC time loss claims (calculated within the year of injury) are: 2019 to date (356), 2018 (279), 2017 (451). Note: In 2019, 4 claims account for 286 days.

Early return of injured workers using modified duties and gradual return to work plans are initiated when an employee is medically cleared. This is vital to reducing the cost of our lost time claims, as these cost the RDN three times the value of the absent employee's hourly rate, on average, due to increased premiums being applied in response. WSBC claims are now actively and appropriately managed to ensure fair and consistent decisions by WSBC.

WSBC compliance with respect to the development of a comprehensive and effective OHSP was a priority in 2018/2019. Additional safety activities included:

- Six JOHS Committees meet monthly to discuss health and safety issues, identify and promote injury prevention activities;
- Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment process;
- Delivery of safety training courses and development of training matrix;
- JOHS Committee member training;
- Training of supervisors in their roles and responsibilities;
- Monthly safety themes to increase awareness of injury hazards and risk control methods; and
- Training of employees who manage contractors and establish safety responsibilities at those worksites.

Further initiatives to address high injury trends will be a priority in 2020 and include:

- A safety training calendar that will be issued early in the year that includes a variety of safety courses to be delivered throughout the year;
- In January 2020, an occupational health and safety report will be prepared that consolidates 2019 employee injury statistics. Each JOHS Committee will be challenged to develop a

couple of action items to address injury prevention initiatives in their areas based on their injury trends;

- Risk assessments will be conducted using evidenced-based hazard identification and quantification (i.e. asbestos exposures, biogas, confined space gas hazards, etc.); and
- Standards for required personal protective equipment (safety glasses, gloves, hardhat, respirator, etc.) will be established through safe work procedures.

An Attendance Management Program was initiated in July 2019, based on supporting employees who have trends of using frequent sick time. Based on this initiative, we will be closely monitoring absences which should further assist in our efforts to keep employees healthy and at work.

ALTERNATIVES

That the Occupational Health and Safety Report dated August 22, 2019 be received for information.

That the Board provide alternate direction to staff.

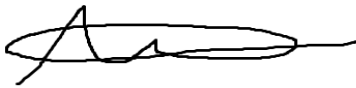
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

WSBC assessments in 2019 (\$568,073) are projected to be \$8,706 less than 2018 assessments (\$576,779). The assessment projection is subject to the RDN's overall payroll in 2019.

The RDN's 2019 assessment rates were calculated in October 2018 by WSBC. The assessment rates are calculated by calculating the RDN injury claim costs (health care costs, wage loss, pensions, and survivor benefits) for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 (on a 3-year rolling average). The 2020 assessment rates will be calculated in October, and will consider 2016, 2017 and 2018 RDN injury claim costs. As a result of the calculation method, claim costs have a financial influence on WSBC assessment rates for 3 years. Therefore, 2019 improvements in health and safety, and the impact on reduced claim costs, will not be noticed until 2021 assessments.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The OHSP supports the Board values of Fiscal Responsibility and Good Governance.



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October 21, 2019

Reviewed by:

- J. Tait, Human Resources Manager, Corporate Services
- D. Wells, General Manager, Corporate Services

- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

- 2019 January to June Occupational Health and Safety Report