

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD COVID-19 Work Related Injuries – Summary October 8, 2021

Issue

Questions may be asked about the number of workers contracting COVID-19 in the course of employment.

Response

- Similar to all Canadian jurisdictions, workplace compensation in Saskatchewan is available for *work-related* injuries or illnesses.
- When determining if a worker has contracted COVID-19 through employment, WCB will consider if:
 - The nature and location of the worker's employment or employment activities have created an elevated risk of contracting COVID-19 (i.e., involves sufficient exposure).
 - The worker's COVID-19 has been medically confirmed.
 - The time from the date of exposure and the onset of COVID-19 has been established to exist in the workplace.
- As the number of COVID-19 cases increase, multiple potential sources exist at work, home and in the community, which creates challenges in establishing the link between the exposure and employment. Decisions to accept COVID-19 claims are made by determining if it's more likely than not that employment was the most probable source of the COVID-19.
- 68% of COVID-19 injury claims are accepted as having arisen out of and in the course of employment.

COVID-19 Injury Claims¹

	2020	2021	Total	Percentage of Decisions ³
Accepted	347	893	1,240	68.4%
<i>Fatality</i>	0	4	4	
<i>Time Loss</i>	339	868	1,207	
<i>No Time Loss</i>	8	21	29	
Decision Pending	0	11	11	0.6%
Disallowed²	252	311	563	31.0%
Total Reported	599	1,215	1,814	100%

¹ Numbers may change due to new claims and claim coding updates, etc.

Does not include psychological injury claims due to the COVID-19 situation (see table below).

² Disallowed includes those with no COVID-19 diagnosis, no exposure through employment, claim cancelled, etc. May include claims where COVID-19 was assessed and disallowed but a physical injury also occurred which was accepted.

³ Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Background

COVID-19 Injury Claims by Industry and Occupation

- Over 54% of the COVID-19 injury claims reported are from workers within two industry rate codes:
 - 39.75% from G22 (Health Authority, Hospitals, Care Homes).
 - 15.05% from G51 (Government of Saskatchewan and Ministries).

Top Industry Rate Codes with COVID-19 Injury Claims

Rate Code	Rate Description	2020			2021				Grand total
		Accepted	Disallowed	Total	Accepted	Pending	Disallowed	Total	
G22	Health Authority, Hospitals, Care Homes	193	89	282	348		91	439	721
G51	Government of Saskatchewan and Ministries	17	22	39	191	7	36	234	273
M72	Processing Meat, Poultry and Fish	27	12	39	31		30	61	100
S21	Community and Social Services	36	3	39	43		8	51	90
G31	Cities, Towns, Villages, RMs	16	17	33	39	1	5	45	78
M91	Agricultural Equipment	3	24	27	10		18	28	55
S23	Hotels, Motels, Taxis	16	30	46	1		7	8	54
M81	Metal Foundries and Mills	8	9	17	9		12	21	38
D73	Underground Hardrock Mining	3		3	20	3	10	33	36
C41	Co-operative Associations	2	18	20	3		5	8	28
All other industries (including unknown)		26	28	54	198	0	89	287	341
Total		347	252	599	893	11	311	1,215	1,814

Top Occupations with COVID-19 Injury Claims

Occupation	2020			2021				Grand total
	Accepted	Disallowed	Total	Accepted	Pending	Disallowed	Total	
Assisting Occupations in Support of Health Services	82	19	101	122		32	154	255
Other Occupations in Protective Service	7	10	17	185	1	25	211	228
Nurse Supervisors and Registered Nurses	49	30	79	109		26	135	214
Other Technical Occupations in Health Care (Except Dental)	35	20	55	68		11	79	134
Labourers in Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities	16	29	45	37		41	78	123

Occupation	2020			2021				Grand total
	Accepted	Disallowed	Total	Accepted	Pending	Disallowed	Total	
Paralegals, Social Services Workers and Occupations in Education and Religion, n.e.c.	34	6	40	38		7	45	85
Police Officers and Firefighters	13	21	34	23	1	5	29	63
Cleaners	15	8	23	24		9	33	56
Other Elemental Service Occupations	7	25	32	3		7	10	42
Retail Salespersons & Sales Clerks	3	13	16	12		12	24	40
All other occupations (including unknown)	86	71	157	272	9	136	417	574
Total	347	252	599	893	11	311	1,215	1,814

Disallowed COVID-19 Injury Claims

- The following situations do not indicate a work injury under *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013* and are considered disallowed:
 - Worker withdraws from work to be tested for COVID-19.
 - Worker withdraws from work for preventative measures.
 - Worker is sent home on a precautionary basis by their employer.
- Should a worker develop symptoms after leaving work where it can be confirmed that they were exposed and a COVID-19 diagnosis has been provided, it may be considered a work injury.

Average Days & Costs

Average number of days from registration to decision ¹	17.5
Average number of days on compensation (accepted time loss claims only) ¹	18.2
Average cost per accepted claim with costs ¹	\$3,502
Number of disallowed claims with positive COVID-19 diagnosis where exposure was linked to a non-work-related source.	165 (approx. 29% of disallowed)

¹ Includes COVID-19 injury claims and COVID-19-related psychological claims.

COVID-19 Related Psychological Injury Claims¹

	2020	2021	Total
Accepted	0	2	2
Decision Pending	0	0	0
Disallowed ²	23	6	29
Total Reported	23	8	31

¹ Includes only psychological injury claims due to COVID-19 situation.

² May include claims where a COVID-19-related psychological injury was assessed and disallowed but was accepted for another work-related diagnosis.