

2024 Impact of Workplace Injury Report

Protecting Nova Scotia's workforce from the impact of workplace injury

At WCB Nova Scotia, we're on a mission to contribute to a better future for our province. We need Nova Scotians working more than ever before. Guided by our new strategic plan, we are protecting Nova Scotia's workforce from the impact of workplace injury. Improving our service and focusing on the right things, we're fostering safer workplaces, and we're helping those off work because of an injury return to their usual routine sooner, often with work as part of recovery.

This focus is driving real change. In 2024, Nova Scotia's workplace injury rate continued to decline, with particularly strong progress in our largest sector — health and social services — where the injury rate among health care workers has dropped 30 per cent over the past decade. Psychological injury also continued to take a toll — and we helped people in new ways, as we began offering coverage for gradual onset psychological injuries.

Tragically, 20 people lost their lives at work, or because of their work in 2024. That's a profound, preventable loss that no family or loved one should ever have to endure.

The problem in Nova Scotia is this: When they're injured, people in Nova Scotia stay off the job much longer than in other parts of Canada — many for life. It's a real economic cost — and it's a social and human cost, too. When a Nova Scotian is off work due to injury, they're not building homes, or serving meals, or helping someone heal in hospital.

It's a big problem, and it requires a big solution. That's why we're increasing accountability across the system and improving our service to accelerate return-to-work outcomes.

This report shares the human impact of workplace injury in our province: How many people were hurt, how they were hurt, and how much time they missed from work.

We're calling back people sooner and processing claims quicker — and through stricter oversight with health providers, employers and workers, making sure everyone else in the system plays their part too.

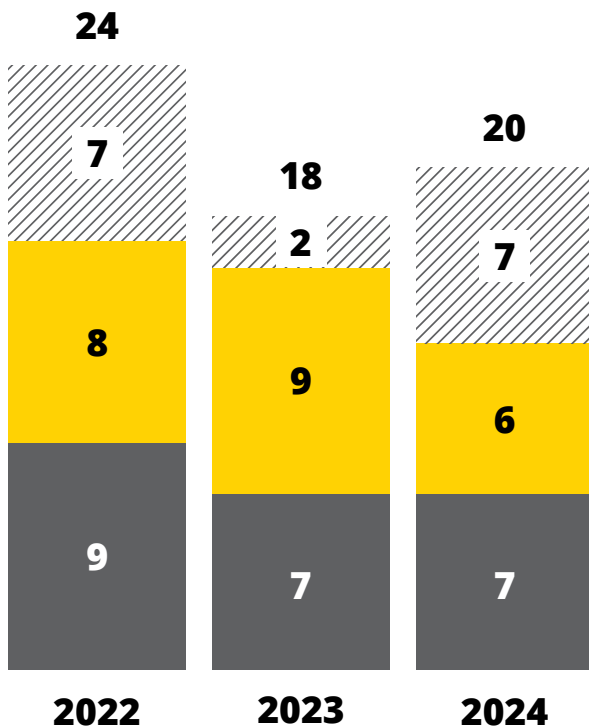
Together, we can change these outcomes. In all we do, we're driven by a vision of a safer, stronger Nova Scotia workforce.



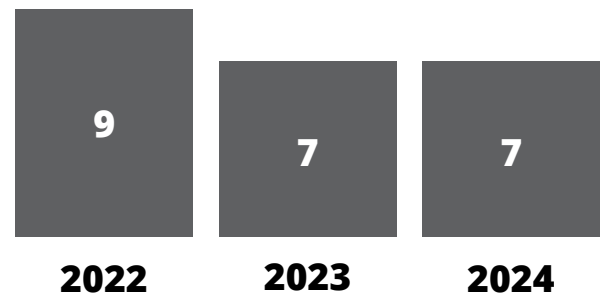
Workplace fatalities

In 2024, 20 Nova Scotians tragically lost their life at or because of their work.

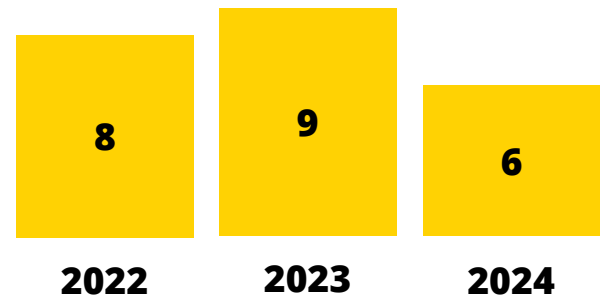
Fatalities include all workplace injuries that resulted in the death of a worker as reported by the OH&S Division of the NS Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration.



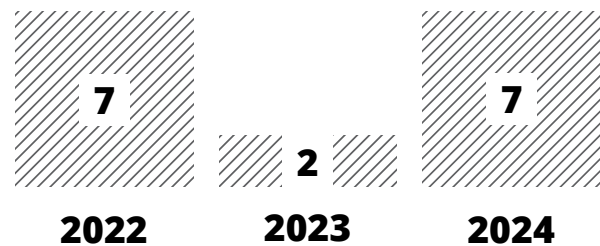
Acute Fatalities



Occupational Diseases

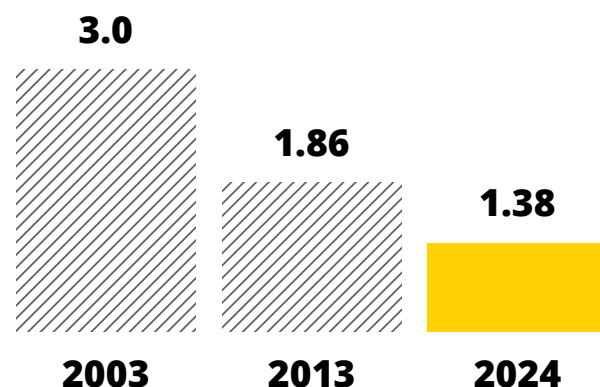


Health-related



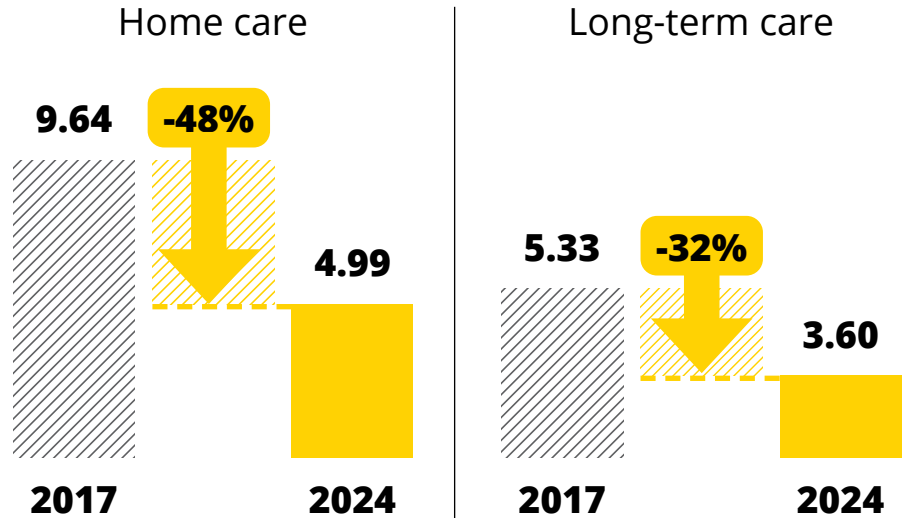
Provincial injury rate continues to decline

The 2024 provincial injury rate is at an all-time low — and less than half of what it was when WCB began leading injury prevention two decades ago.



Low injury rate in health and social services

The injury rate in health and social services — the province's largest sector — has steadily improved over the last decade. In high-demand areas like long-term care and homecare in particular, the injury rate is the lowest it's ever been.



Workplace injury's workforce impact at a glance

About 75 per cent of workers return to work with no time loss. While the injury rate is less than half what it was when WCB became involved in prevention, about 5,000 Nova Scotians a year lose three or more days of work due to injury. And, a far higher percentage of those go on to receive long-term benefits compared to other jurisdictions.



People are off work in Nova Scotia because of an injury longer than anywhere else in Canada

In Nova Scotia, the percentage of workers who are still receiving benefits after two years is Canada's highest — and nearly 10 times that of Manitoba, a comparable jurisdiction in size.

It's a problem WCB is working to fix, with a strong focus on the early stages of a claim, service improvements, and better accountability across the system.

Source: Workers' Compensation Review Committee Report, 2024

% of claims on earnings replacement benefits after 2 years

9.8%



Nova Scotia

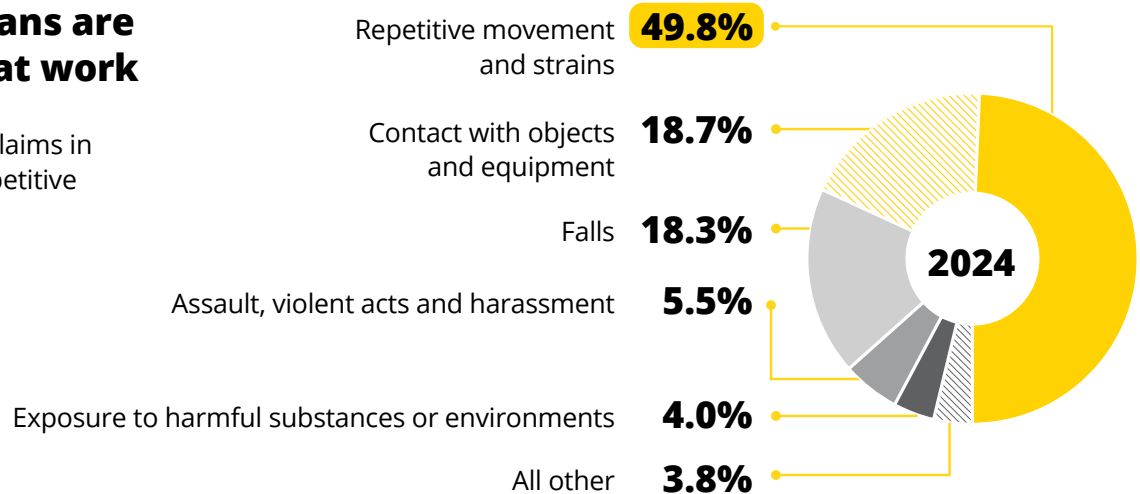
1.1%



Manitoba

How Nova Scotians are getting injured at work

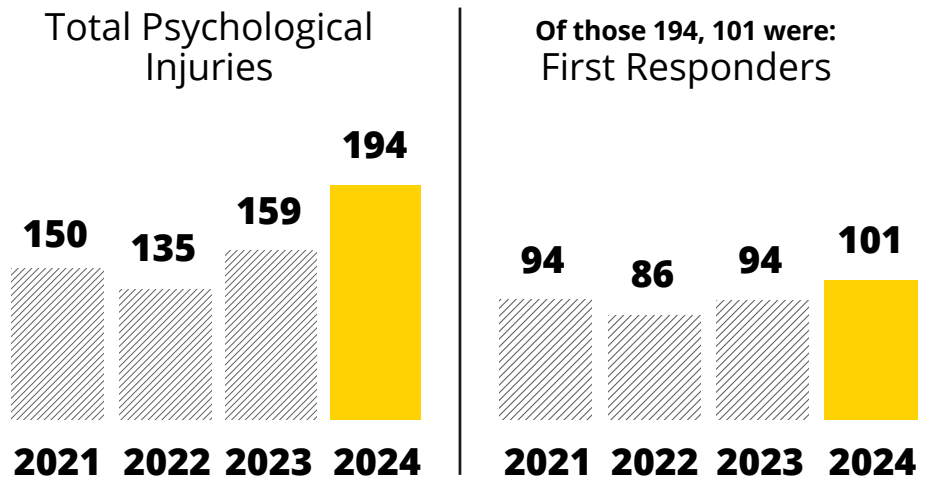
Nearly half of time-loss claims in 2024 were caused by repetitive strain injuries.



The impact of workplace psychological injuries

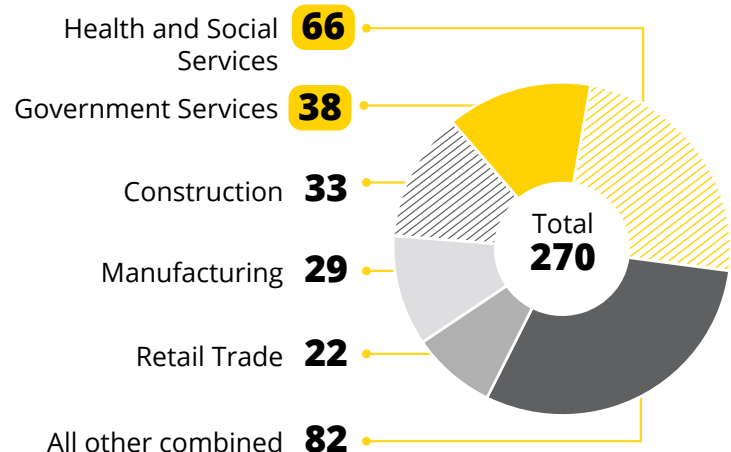
In 2024, 194 Nova Scotians lost time from work because of a traumatic psychological injury.

In September of that year, WCB began offering coverage for gradual onset psychological injuries — including a new service model and immediate connections to community-based mental health supports.

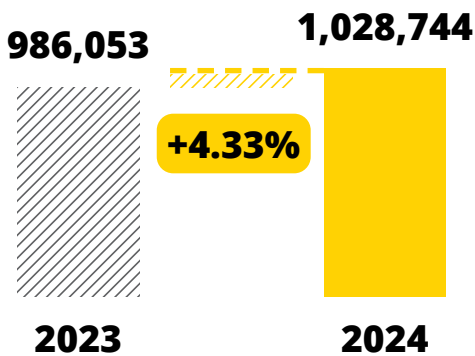


Time-loss days per 100 by sector

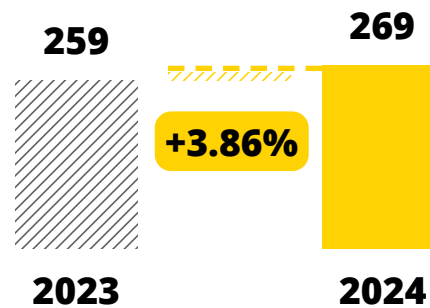
Workplace injury leaves too many Nova Scotians off the job, for too long. In particular, there is great opportunity to improve return-to-work outcomes in the public sector.



Total days lost to workplace injury



Total days lost per 100 covered workers



2025 Snapshot to date: Change is happening

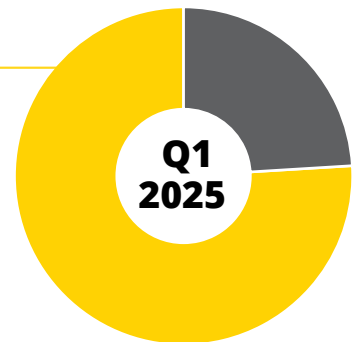
New processes introduced in the fall of 2024 are already making a difference.

Improvements in return to work

A focus on the first 30 days of a claim and better managing health services is improving RTW outcomes.

74%

of workers returned to work within 90 days in Q1 2025



By 2030, we will return the equivalent of 1,000 full time positions to the Nova Scotia workforce that are not working today.

That mission to protect workforce is what drives us. It guides our on-the-ground efforts at workplaces across the province, with every worker we help, with every message we return. It's how we contribute to a better Nova Scotia of tomorrow.

Work needs people — and people need work. Our jobs aren't just a source of income — they're a source of fulfillment and purpose. Work is so important on every level — to Nova Scotians, to employers, and to the province of tomorrow. And that is what we protect.

After all, we all want the same thing: **We want Nova Scotians working.**



Injury Rate and Claim Volumes by Industry For Nova Scotia, 2024

	Excluding Self Insured Claims								Including Self Insured Claims			
	Assessable Payroll (\$ millions)	% of Total Assessable Payroll	Number of Claims Registered	% of Claims Registered	Number of Time Loss Claims	% of Time Loss Claims	Injury Rate	Injury Rate Last Year (2023)	Number of Claims Registered	% of Claims Registered	Number of Time Loss Claims	% of Time Loss Claims
Health/Social Services	3,396.5	20.6%	4,415	25.2%	1,424	29.7%	2.09	2.35	4,415	21.9%	1,424	27.1%
Construction	2,050.4	12.5%	2,274	13.0%	626	13.0%	1.68	1.52	2,274	11.3%	626	11.9%
Retail Trade	1,888.6	11.5%	1,811	10.3%	488	10.2%	1.02	0.94	1,910	9.5%	526	10.0%
Manufacturing	1,871.3	11.4%	2,444	13.9%	498	10.4%	1.38	1.38	2,444	12.1%	498	9.5%
Wholesale Trade	1,330.6	8.1%	1,325	7.5%	257	5.4%	0.98	0.94	1,325	6.6%	257	4.9%
Business Services	1,051.5	6.4%	275	1.6%	71	1.5%	0.29	0.29	275	1.4%	71	1.3%
Accommodation/Food/Beverages	943.7	5.7%	1,062	6.0%	290	6.0%	0.98	0.92	1,062	5.3%	290	5.5%
Transportation/Storage	758.9	4.6%	783	4.5%	294	6.1%	2.17	2.07	787	3.9%	295	5.6%
Government Services	658.3	4.0%	658	3.7%	196	4.1%	1.81	1.76	1,796	8.9%	564	10.7%
Communication/Utilities	584.1	3.5%	528	3.0%	122	2.5%	1.09	1.27	653	3.2%	173	3.3%
Other Services	556.4	3.4%	565	3.2%	133	2.8%	0.93	1.03	565	2.8%	133	2.5%
Educational Services	537.2	3.3%	728	4.1%	245	5.1%	1.84	1.70	729	3.6%	245	4.7%
Fishing/Trapping	357.0	2.2%	221	1.3%	56	1.2%	0.95	1.33	221	1.1%	56	1.1%
Real Estate/Insurance Agents	198.3	1.2%	159	0.9%	29	0.6%	0.60	0.96	159	0.8%	29	0.6%
Agriculture/Related Services	108.3	0.7%	126	0.7%	47	1.0%	1.87	1.57	126	0.6%	47	0.9%
Mining/Quarries/Oil Wells	64.2	0.4%	66	0.4%	15	0.3%	1.65	1.79	81	0.4%	15	0.3%
Logging/Forestry	57.5	0.3%	57	0.3%	11	0.2%	0.93	1.03	57	0.3%	11	0.2%
Finance/Insurance	52.3	0.3%	5	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.00	0.00	5	0.0%	0	0.0%
Unknown	0.0	0.0%	52	0.3%	0	0.0%	0.00	0.00	1,302	6.5%	0	0.0%
Total	\$16,465.2	100.0%	17,554	100.0%	4,802	100.0%			20,186	100.0%	5,260	100.0%

Status of New Claims

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Compensable Time Loss	4,977	5,391	5,420	5,217	5,260
Other:	-	-	-	-	-
No Compensable Time Loss	10,445	11,026	10,207	10,339	11,674
Not Pursued or Disallowed	4,522	4,866	4,900	4,931	3,252
Other Subtotal	14,967	15,892	15,107	15,270	14,926
Total	19,944	21,283	20,527	20,487	20,186
Fatalities ¹	32	20	24	18	20
Clients with Registered Claims ²	18,277	19,483	18,873	18,920	18,783

1 Fatalities include all workplace injuries that resulted in the death of a worker as reported by the OH&S Division of the NS Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

2 Claims represented are those with accident dates during the report year. Time-loss claims are defined as those claims with accident dates in the report year which received a time-loss benefit during the report year, or within two months of the report year. Some WCB clients may have more than one injury/claim in a year, therefore, the number of clients with claims registered does not equal the number of claims registered.

Injury Event Compensable time-loss claims

	2023	%	2024	%
Bodily Reaction and Exertion	2,516	48.2%	2,618	49.8%
Contact With Objects and Equipment	914	17.5%	983	18.7%
Falls	1,047	20.1%	965	18.3%
Assaults, Violent Acts and Harassment	285	5.5%	287	5.5%
Exposure to Harmful Substances or Environments	240	4.6%	208	4.0%
Transportation Accidents	188	3.6%	164	3.1%
Other Events or Exposures	21	0.4%	31	0.6%
Fires and Explosions	6	0.1%	4	0.1%
Total	5,217	100%	5,260	100%

Age at Injury Date

Compensable time-loss claims

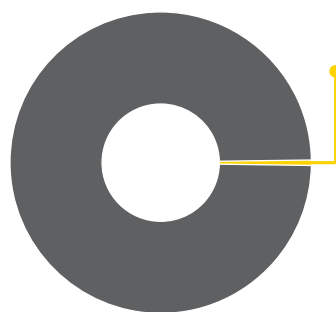
	2023	%	2024	%
Less than 20	96	1.8%	120	2.3%
20 to 24	465	8.9%	433	8.2%
25 to 29	559	10.7%	623	11.8%
30 to 34	578	11.1%	584	11.1%
35 to 39	543	10.4%	521	9.9%
40 to 44	541	10.4%	523	9.9%
45 to 49	599	11.5%	561	10.7%
50 to 54	576	11.0%	599	11.4%
55 to 59	580	11.1%	604	11.5%
60 to 64	470	9.0%	449	8.5%
65 or older	210	4.0%	243	4.6%
	5,217	100.0%	5,260	100.0%

Source of Injury Compensable time-loss claims

	2023	%	2024	%
Persons, Plants, Animals, and Minerals	1,999	38.3%	2,284	43.4%
Structures and Surfaces	1,039	19.9%	801	15.2%
Containers	461	8.8%	394	7.5%
Parts and Materials	384	7.4%	371	7.1%
Tools, Instruments, and Equipment	328	6.3%	345	6.6%
Other Sources	206	3.9%	345	6.6%
Vehicles	375	7.2%	326	6.2%
Machinery	225	4.3%	206	3.9%
Furniture and Fixtures	180	3.5%	154	2.9%
Chemicals and Chemical Products	20	0.4%	34	0.6%
Total	5,217	100.0%	5,260	100.0%

Claims by Firm

Number of Claims Registered	Number of Firms	Cumulative % of Total Number of Firms	Number of New Claims Registered	Cumulative % of Total New Claims Registered	Assessable Payroll (\$ millions)	Cumulative % of Total Assessable Payroll
200 or more	11	0.05%	5,370	26.60%	2,853.1	17.3%
100 or more	20	0.10%	6,704	33.21%	3,644.9	22.1%
50 or more	39	0.19%	7,941	39.34%	4,293.9	26.1%
25 or more	94	0.47%	9,783	48.46%	5,300.8	32.2%
10 or more	289	1.43%	12,600	62.42%	7,035.6	42.7%
5 or more	585	2.90%	14,502	71.84%	8,366.2	50.8%



1% of employers

have

60% of workplace injury

Part of Body

Compensable time-loss claims

	2023	%	2024	%
Back, including spine, spinal cord	1,228	23.5%	1,240	23.6%
All Other	534	10.2%	581	11.0%
Shoulder, including clavicle, scapula	506	9.7%	506	9.6%
Leg(s)	520	10.0%	496	9.4%
Multiple body parts	518	9.9%	468	8.9%
Finger(s), fingernail(s)	323	6.2%	282	5.4%
Cranial region, including skull	318	6.1%	273	5.2%
Ankle(s)	286	5.5%	259	4.9%
Arm(s)	212	4.1%	258	4.9%
Wrist(s)	176	3.4%	207	3.9%
Body systems	199	3.8%	206	3.9%
Hand(s), except finger(s)	100	1.9%	149	2.8%
Foot(feet), except toe(s)	128	2.5%	135	2.6%
Chest, including ribs, internal organs	102	2.0%	109	2.1%
Face	67	1.3%	91	1.7%
Total	5,217	100%	5,260	100%

Nature of Injury

Compensable time-loss claims

	2023	%	2024	%
Sprains, Strains	3,321	63.7%	3,196	60.8%
Fractures, Dislocations	515	9.9%	458	8.7%
Contusion, Crushing, Bruise	239	4.6%	372	7.1%
Concussions, Intracranial Injuries	326	6.2%	308	5.9%
Cut, Laceration, Puncture	274	5.3%	258	4.9%
Mental Disorders or Syndromes	142	2.7%	178	3.4%
Other traumatic injuries and disorders	116	2.2%	152	2.9%
Inflamed Joint, Tendon, Muscle	65	1.2%	138	2.6%
All Other	110	2.1%	109	2.1%
Burns	79	1.5%	64	1.2%
Digestive system diseases and disorders	30	0.6%	27	0.5%
Total	5,217	100%	5,260	100%