
2024 Prevention Initiative Annual Update



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Introduction

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Prevention Initiative is a collaborative effort focused on improving health and safety within Alberta's workplaces. Since 2019, the initiative has brought together interested parties such as employers, workers, health and safety associations, labour organizations, service providers, the Workers' Compensation Board – Alberta (WCB) and government to collaborate and proactively identify potential hazards, eliminate or minimize risks and foster a culture of health and safety. The initiative aims to raise awareness of the most common workplace injuries and illnesses and develop strategies to address these issues effectively. Alberta's OHS system collaborators work together to share knowledge and create evidence-informed approaches to improve health and safety practices. By aligning efforts and focusing on priority areas, the Prevention Initiative strives to create healthier and safer workplace for all Albertans.

This annual update highlights the actions taken over the past calendar year to raise awareness and address illness and injury areas where workers are most likely to be affected. It outlines a path to continue improving the prevention of illness and injury and promoting workplace health and safety, in 2025 and beyond.

OHS Prevention Initiative principles

In Alberta, the internal responsibility system is a key element of OHS legislation, where everyone in the workplace has a role in ensuring a healthy and safe environment. While employers usually carry the most responsibility, all parties, including workers, must contribute, with an understanding that authority and control may not always be shared equally.

This system is based on some core principles: a shared commitment to preventing OHS incidents, encouraging collaboration among work site parties to increase their impact and setting priorities that allow for actions tailored to the specific requirements of each work site. These efforts ensure that while addressing work site-specific needs, actions remain aligned with Alberta's overall OHS framework, driving meaningful improvements in workplace health and safety across the province.

Prevention Initiative priorities

Analysis and validation from Alberta OHS system collaborators, supported by data from WCB – Alberta, reconfirms that established priority areas remain significant issues across all industries and populations. These continue to include:

- musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) due to repetitive use, overexertion and heavy lifting;
- slips, trips and falls; and
- psychosocial hazards (i.e., workplace violence and harassment or mental health).

The OHS Prevention Initiative also focuses on workforce types known to be at higher risk of injury and illness. These are:

- small businesses – private sector employers who have less than 20 workers; and
- workers with vulnerabilities - individuals who fit into one or more of the following categories:
 - younger workers (aged 24 or less)
 - older workers (aged 55 or more)
 - Indigenous workers

- workers with short tenure of work (temporary, seasonal or casual arrangements, up to six months)
- workers with multiple jobs
- temporary foreign workers and/or migrants.

In 2023, the WCB – Alberta spent \$347 million for nearly 50,000 injury and illness claims, not including the 106 fatalities that also occurred in 2023 ([Workplace injury, illness and fatality statistics. Provincial summary 2023](#)).^{1,2} From 2022 to 2023, the MSD claim rate decreased 2.9 per cent, the slip and trip claim rate decreased by 22.2 per cent and the fall claim rate decreased by 13.3 per cent (Figure 1). Over the same time period the psychosocial hazards claim rate and the violence and harassment claim rate did not change.

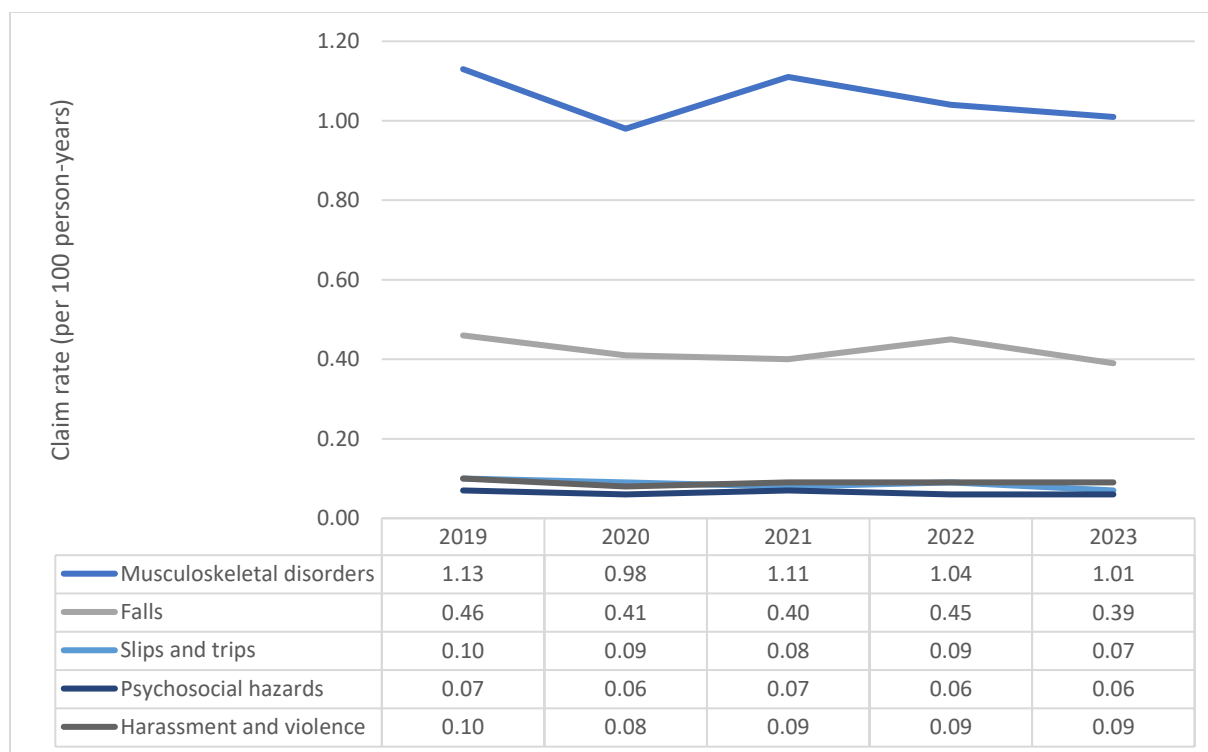


Figure 1. Claim rate (per 100 person-years) in Alberta from 2019-2023 by OHS Prevention Initiative injury and illness category. Source: [Workplace injury, illness and fatality statistics. Provincial summary 2023](#).

In 2023, of all claims WCB – Alberta accepted, MSDs accounted for 41 per cent, and falls accounted for 16 per cent (Figure 2). Harassment and violence accounted for four per cent, slips and trips accounted for three per cent, and psychosocial hazards accounted for two per cent. When the worker's occupation was analyzed, nurse aides, orderlies and patient services associates was the occupation group with the most claims for both MSDs and harassment and violence (Table 1). Transport truck drivers had the most slip, trip and fall claims.

Bodily motion with impact involved was the only source of injury category reported for slip and trip claims. In addition, it is the source of injury category for 37 per cent of musculoskeletal disorder claims (Table 2).

¹ Although this Prevention Initiative Annual Update reports on activities from 2024, the most recent published injury and illness data currently available is from 2023 and is highlighted above.

² Claim costs and counts may fluctuate as claims are fully processed.

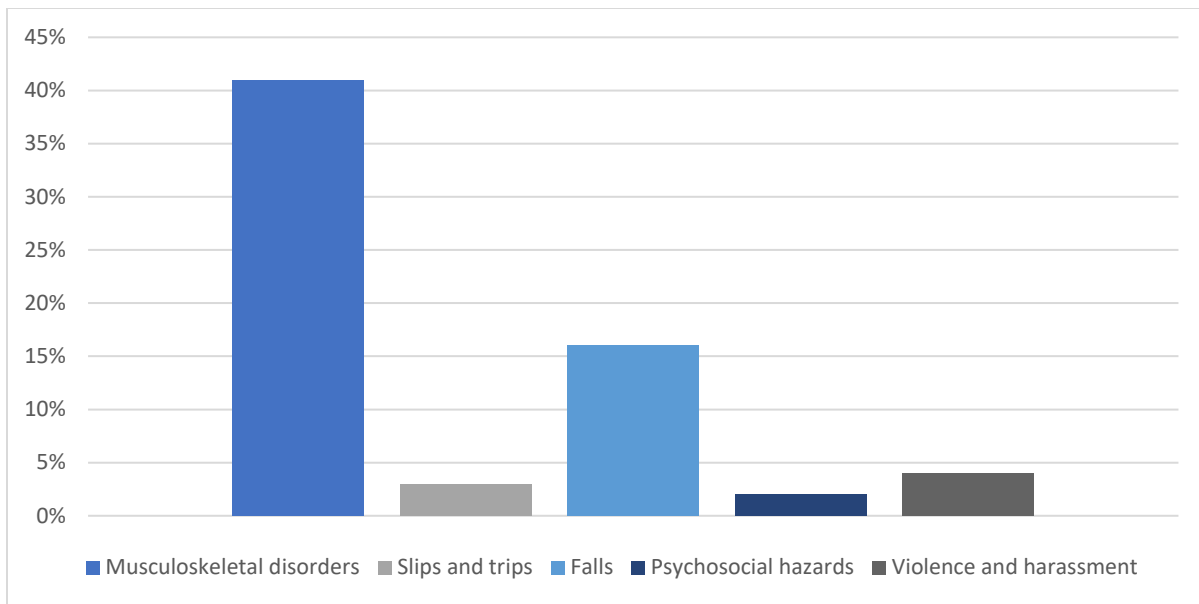


Figure 2. Proportion of 2023 workplace injury and illness claims by OHS Prevention Initiative injury and illness category. Source: [Workplace injury, illness and fatality statistics. Provincial summary 2023.](#)

TABLE 1. OCCUPATION GROUP WITH THE MOST CLAIMS IN EACH PREVENTION INITIATIVE INJURY AND ILLNESS CATEGORY

Injury and illness category	Occupation group with most claims	Per centage of claims
Musculoskeletal disorders	Nurse aides, orderlies and patient services associates	7%
Slips and trips	Transport truck drivers	7%
Falls	Transport truck drivers	8%
Mental health	Paramedical	17%
Violence and harassment	Nurse aides, orderlies and patient services associates	16%

Source: [Workplace injury, illness and fatality statistics. Provincial summary 2023.](#)

TABLE 2. MOST COMMON TYPE OF INCIDENT AND SOURCE OF INJURY FOR EACH PREVENTION INITIATIVE INJURY AND ILLNESS CATEGORY

Injury and illness category	Most common type of incident	Per centage of claims	Most common source of injury	Per centage of claims
Musculoskeletal disorders	Overexertion	26%	Bodily motion with impact involved	37%
Slips and trips	Slip, trip or loss of balance without falling	52%	Bodily motion with impact involved	100%
Falls	Fall to floor, walkway or other surface	60%	Floor, walkway or ground surface	36%
Psychosocial hazards	Exposure to traumatic or stressful event	34%	Bodily condition with impact involved	53%
Violence and harassment	Hitting, kicking or beating	30%	A person that is not an injured or ill worker	36%

Source: [Workplace injury, illness and fatality statistics. Provincial summary 2023.](#)

Engagement

In 2024, Alberta OHS staff continued our commitment to engage with new and non-traditional stakeholders and increased outreach to engage with priority workforce types (workers who may have vulnerabilities and small businesses), to increase awareness and access to OHS resources. These included:

- 29 webinar and in-person presentations;
- 11 exhibitor engagements at conferences and events; and
- 47 meetings with interested party organizations.

The presentations and exhibitor booths provided an estimated 6,000 workers and employers with injury and illness prevention information including resources. The interested party meetings included discussions and collaboration to support organizations' members with workplace health and safety information with a focus on prevention, but also information related to compliance with Alberta's OHS legislation.

Many of the newer groups, priority populations and organizations Alberta OHS were able to connect with during 2024 identified appreciation for the free online and printed, physical materials. Some mentioned they would like to see additional resources for youth, new tools such as injury cost calculators and many requested in-person presentations from Alberta OHS as follow-up.

Counts of online views in 2024 indicated that [Prevention Initiative resources](#) continue to be used and viewed extensively by Alberta's workers and employers (Table 3), particularly for psychosocial hazards. To expand awareness of these materials, Alberta OHS staff developed many social media posts for X (formerly known as Twitter) (Table 4), in addition to 11 posts on LinkedIn, published on the ministry of Jobs, Economy and Trade social media accounts.

TABLE 3. NUMBER OF TIMES RESOURCES WERE VIEWED ON THE OHS RESOURCE PORTAL BY TYPE AND INITIATIVE FOCUS IN 2024

Initiative focus	All resources	Bulletins	Posters/postcards	Videos
Slips, trips, falls (STF)	4,287	3,297	N/A	990
Psychosocial hazards (PSH)	8,840	4,044	1,481	3,315
Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD)	3,925	694	2,123	1,106
Young workers	1,624	1,055	569	N/A
Small businesses	26,177	26,177	N/A	N/A
Indigenous workers	709	709	N/A	N/A
Total	45,562	35,976	4,173	5,411

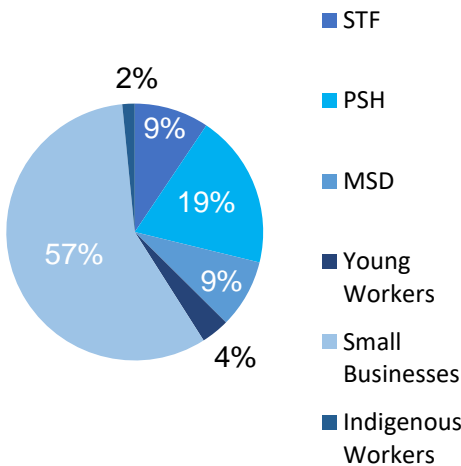


TABLE 4. SOCIAL MEDIA (X) POSTS FOR 2024

Initiative focus	Topic	Views	Month
Young worker	Apprenticeship Day	464	Sept
Small businesses	Online Searchable Legislation update	555	Jul
Small businesses	Introduction to Disability Management and Occupational Health & Safety webinar	539	Sept
Small businesses	Introduction to Disability Management and Occupational Health & Safety webinar	292	Sept
Young worker	Occupational Health & Safety and Employment Standards for Young Workers webinar	154	Sept
Young worker	Occupational Health & Safety and Employment Standards for Young Workers webinar	204	Oct
Musculoskeletal disorders	Global Ergonomics Month	97	Oct
Young worker	Occupational Health & Safety and Employment Standards for Young Workers webinar	114	Oct
Psychosocial hazards	World Mental Health Day	154	Oct
Psychosocial hazards	Safe Minds, Safe Work: Addressing Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace	93	Oct
Musculoskeletal disorders	Global Ergonomics Month	101	Oct
Slips, trips, falls	Fall Prevention Month	114	Nov

¹ Posted by @AlbertaEconomy on X.com

Partner spotlight – Continuing Care Safety Association

The OHS Prevention Initiative steering committee includes Certifying Partners who annually report on their accomplishments towards addressing Prevention Initiative priorities. One of these Certifying Partners is the Continuing Care Safety Association (CCSA). Their executive director, Dana Loeppky, provided additional details on the work CCSA does for workplace injury and illness prevention and in partnership with Alberta OHS.

CCSA is committed to fostering a psychologically safe work environment in continuing care. As a proud signatory of the Declaration of Commitment to Psychological Health and Safety in Healthcare, CCSA aligns its efforts with the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. This commitment ensures that workers' mental well-being is prioritized alongside physical safety, recognizing its direct connection to quality resident/client care. To support its members, CCSA developed a Psychological Health and Safety Program, providing essential tools and resources to help organizations build and enhance their psychological health and safety management systems. The program focuses on three key areas:

- 1. promoting worker mental health;
- 2. psychological protection from violence and harassment; and
- 3. preventing psychological harm.

Workplace violence remains a significant concern in the continuing care sector. From 2019 to 2023, 64 per cent of mental health claims were related to workplace violence, with 83.4 per cent of incidents involving a patient or resident as the source of injury (CCSA data). These statistics highlight the need for proactive measures.

64 per cent of mental health claims were related to workplace violence

In response, CCSA developed a Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Guided Support initiative to help organizations mitigate risks. The association also published a white paper: “Protecting Workers’ Safety in Managing the Risks of Violence, Harassment & Responsive Behaviors,” offering strategic guidance and best practices to improve worker safety.

In 2024, CCSA’s ACCESS4MH Project received a \$150,000 grant from Alberta Health, allowing the association to deliver The Working Mind training at no cost to organizations. This evidence-based program enhances mental resilience by providing workers with practical tools to manage stress and maintain psychological well-being. In 2024, this initiative allowed CCSA to train about 400 workers for free and has significantly contributed to reducing mental health stigma and empowering workers across continuing care settings.

CCSA is revolutionizing safety training with cutting-edge virtual reality (VR) and 360-degree video learning experiences. These interactive courses offer immersive, scenario-based training to enhance de-escalation skills and workplace safety.

By integrating innovative learning methods with industry-specific safety strategies, CCSA continues to lead the way in psychosocial hazard prevention and workplace violence reduction in Alberta’s continuing care sector.

“Our goal is to equip workers with the training and tools they need to stay safe while delivering quality care.”

Alberta OHS inspections

Each year, Alberta OHS chooses employers and sectors for proactive inspection programs based on relatively high injury and illness rates, high frequency of incidents or complaints, persistently low rates of compliance or emerging trends. OHS officers help work site parties identify OHS hazards and actions to mitigate the hazards. From January 1 to December 31, 2024, the Alberta OHS program conducted 3,786 proactive inspections and issued 2,815 orders (Table 5). Almost all proactive inspection programs focused on psychosocial hazards, slips, trips and falls, small business and workers with vulnerabilities. The only program that did not include all focuses was the ‘cities’ program, which did not include small business.

TABLE 5. PROACTIVE INSPECTION PROGRAMS

Initiative	Inspections & re-inspections	Orders ¹
Suncor inspections	47	13
Continuing care (healthcare)	784	450
Manufacturing	497	459
Wholesaling, warehousing and department stores	1,176	1,187
Cities	375	121
Fire protection cooperatives	15	15
Iron & steel foundries	6	11
Refractory linings	6	0
Rendering plants	6	1
Timber management	24	17
Exhibitions and fairs	51	7
Commercial construction	321	154
Residential construction	262	178
Residential rebuild	34	16
Sand and gravel	78	79
Hail damage	94	98
Major projects	10	9
Total	3,786	2,815

¹This includes the total count of the compliance orders, the stop work orders and stop use orders.

Grant funding

Alberta's government provided the SafeGen program with a \$175,000 grant to continue providing students with foundational health and safety knowledge required by industry and by schools overseeing students' off-campus education. CAREERS: The Next Generation Foundation operates the SafeGen program, which teaches youth workplace health and safety training. CAREERS is an industry-led, non-profit foundation that brings together industry, schools, government and communities to guide youth into successful career pathways. In 2024, students completed more than 13,560 SafeGen courses, providing them a strong foundation for healthy and safe work habits and a better understanding of a healthy and safe work environment. Providing this investment helps to support a worker group with known vulnerabilities for negative OHS outcomes (young workers).

Alberta OHS also supports psychological health and safety through a grant funding program for first responders living with or at risk for post-traumatic stress injuries. The Supporting Psychological Health in First Responders (SPHIFR) grant program has two separate funding streams.

The first stream (Services) provides funding for non-profit organizations that provide services to first responders and emergency health care workers living with or at risk for PTSI. The second stream (Research) provides funding to researchers engaged in applied research that generates evidence on prevention or intervention for first responders and emergency health care workers living with or at risk for PTSI. In 2023-24 the SPHIFR grant program funded 19 projects.

SPHIFR PROJECTS FUNDED IN 2023-24

Project Title	Organization	Grant Stream
Delivering and evaluating CISM peer support training for first responders in Alberta	Alberta Critical Incident Advisory Council	Services
Support group for first responders and front line workers	Momentum Walk-In Counselling Society	Services
An innovative approach to stress reduction for Alberta's first responders	Canadian Women's Wellness Initiative	Services
Supporting psychological health in first responders in rural communities	Town of Wainwright	Services
REBOOT Recovery – Overcoming trauma together	The Veteran Hunters of Canada	Services
PTSI Workshop for first responders and their families	Town of Wembley	Services
PTSI workshop for first responders and their families	Alberta Paramedic Association	Services
Mental health resiliency for Stoney Nakoda EMS first responders	Stoney Nakoda First Nation	Services
Arming first responders with protection against psychological injury	Town of Whitecourt	Services
PTSI workshop for first responders and their families	Elk Point Firefighters Association	Services
Boots on the Ground Peer Support for First Responders – Alberta Division	Boots On the Ground Peer Support for First Responders	Services
Lending libraries	Regional EMS Foundation	Services
Wounded Warriors Canada Trauma Resiliency Program	Wounded Warriors Canada	Services
Exploring onboarding practices for PTSI prevention in entry to practice paramedics	Queens University	Research
Occupational stressors among public safety communicators in Alberta	University of Winnipeg	Research
A wristband-based daily monitoring of post-traumatic stress injury risk for preventive interventions	University of Alberta	Research
Workplace reintegration initiatives for public safety personnel in Alberta	University of Alberta	Research
Development and pilot testing of an intelligent online psychoeducational support program	University of Calgary	Research
Understanding the impacts of emergency response team membership: Trauma, wellness, and ways forward	Memorial University of Newfoundland	Research

The path forward

Alberta OHS is dedicated to working with its system partners and interested parties to further the goals of the Prevention Initiative, including creating and promoting accessible information resources to support workers who are known to be at higher risk, and their employers or supervisors. Alberta OHS officers have effectively incorporated the priorities of the OHS Prevention Initiative into targeted inspections and proactive programs that combine both educational and compliance-focused efforts.

Looking ahead, the initiative will continue to gather insights from interested party outreach and engagement, concentrating on specific groups with higher OHS risks and activities that have a greater potential for serious injury and fatality. These groups include workers in precarious employment situations, new or young workers and workers in high-hazard industries where exposure to hazards can be more prevalent.

Within government, Alberta OHS will continue to work with ministries to better highlight supports for OHS to employers and workers. This will include exploring how changes to secondary education could include information on young worker healthy and safety, how prevention information can support workers in emergency response situations (e.g. wildfires), and how results of grant funded projects can disseminate to inform policy and practice for first responders.

Alberta OHS staff have also developed networks in other Canadian jurisdictions to understand, learn and collaborate about how they are using data, innovation and limited resources to tackle similar OHS issues. Alberta OHS is monitoring several actions being undertaken in these jurisdictions and will evaluate the ability to apply them in Alberta. Alberta OHS plans to create a small business outreach team that can speak directly to small business owners to raise awareness of common OHS issues they are likely to face and highlight available supports that are freely available for their use.

Feedback and evaluation of the initiative will be essential in making improvements to connect key workforce sectors with resources aimed at enhancing prevention efforts. Outreach and engagement feedback has been that initiative information resources are well written, appreciated and applicable to their workplaces, but awareness of our resources was felt to be low. This underscores the importance of OHS continuing with outreach and engagement activities focused on prevention and awareness to get initiative information resources into the hands of those employers, workers and businesses that need them the most. Alberta OHS and its system partners will continue to seek out more presentation and speaker opportunities at work sites and conferences and continue to make our materials more accessible and available for adoption and use in all industry sectors.

Through these ongoing initiatives, Alberta OHS will continue to support the growth of healthy and safe workplaces across the province.
