

April 19, 2005

To the Honorable
Committee of Public Safety
Common Council
City of Milwaukee

Re: Communication from the Department of Employee Relations
transmitting 2005 Report of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.

Dear Committee Members:

File # 041616 directs the Department of Employee Relations to prepare a communication relative to 2005 occupational injuries and illnesses in the City of Milwaukee. This report summarizes the number of recordable cases, the incidence rate, total worker compensation expenditures, and lost work days for the City and by Department.

This report also summarizes the accomplishments and initiatives of the Worker's Compensation Division and the City's Central Safety Committee in relation to creating and maintaining safe work practices and reducing the rate at which accidents are occurring in the workplace.

Recordable cases

Recordable cases are cases in which an employee loses days away from work, suffers an industrial illness, loses consciousness, a fatality occurs, or an accident that requires treatment by a physician beyond first aid.

Total number of recordable cases in the City in 2005 was 1,171. This represents a 2.9% increase over the total number of recordable cases in 2004 at 1137. The average number of recordable cases in the prior five year period is 1,105.

Departments experiencing decreases in the number of recordable cases from 2004 to 2005 are: DCD (29%), Health (14%), Library (21%), and DPW Infrastructure (40%). The number of recordable cases in 2005 was also significantly below the average number of recordable cases during the prior five years as presented below:

Dept	Five year Average 2000-2004	2005 Recordable Cases
DCD	22	17
Health	16	12
Library	19	15
Infrastructure	98	63

Departments experiencing an increase in the number of recordable cases from 2004 are: DPW Operations (3%), Fire (8.4%), and Police (22.5%). The number of recordable cases was higher when compared to the average for the prior five year period as presented below.

Dept	Five year Average 2000-2004	2005 Recordable Cases
DPW Operations	286	352
Fire	334	360
Police	279	316

Public Works Operations Division

The Operations Division includes the following Sections, Forestry, Sanitation (Environmental Services) and Building and Fleet. The Division reported 352 injuries in 2005, an increase of 10 additional cases. There were 34 cases in the Environmental Services Section with lost time of 30 days or more including 7 with lost work days of over 100 days with 4 that exceeded the OSHA threshold of 180 days for a total of 2,389 lost work days.

The injury categories were as follows: 10 contusions - 665 lost work days; 4 sprains - 182 lost work days; 14 strains - 1188 lost work days; 6 miscellaneous injuries that included bee stings, lacerations, slips and falls and fractures - 354 lost work days.

There were 29 cases in the Buildings and Fleet Section with lost work days of 30 days or more including 8 with lost work days over 100 days with 3 that exceeded the OSHA threshold of 180 days for a total of 2,570 lost work days.

The injury categories are: 4 lifting injuries - 218 lost work days; 5 injuries where the employee was struck by or against an object or machinery - 507 lost work days; 8 slips and fall injuries - 679 lost work days; 10 strain or sprain injuries - 960 lost work days; 2 occupational injuries - 206 lost work days

Fire

The Fire department reported a total of 360 injuries in 2005, an increase of 26 additional cases. Contributing to this increase were 113 injuries that occurred at the engine houses and 18 injuries during training. Of the total recordable cases, 83 cases resulted in lost work days of 30 days or more. Included in this number were 31 cases with 100 or more days of lost time including 7 cases that exceeded the OSHA threshold of 180 days for a total of 7,369 lost work days.

The injury categories are as follows: 7 Dismount injuries - 678 lost work days; 2 Physical fitness - 155 lost work days; 15 lifting injuries - 1187 lost work days; 1 routine at quarter chore injury - 180 lost work days; 16 slips and falls - 1509 lost work days; 36 sprains and strains - 3278 lost work days; 2 training injuries - 103 lost work days; 1 occupational exposure injury - 118 lost work days; 3 miscellaneous injuries - 161 lost work days.

Police

In 2005 the Police department had a total of 316 recordable cases, an increase of 58 cases. Contributing to this increase were six (6) workplace tuberculosis (TB) exposure incidents that resulted in 16 recordable cases; 17 hearing loss claims and 11 stress claims. Of the total recordable cases, 51 had lost time of 30 days or more. Included in this number were 12 cases with lost time of over 100 days with 4 cases with lost time that exceeded the OSHA threshold of 180 days for a total of 3,972 lost work days.

The injury categories for the 51 injuries are as follows: 10 Slips and falls - 743 days lost; 16 Squad accidents - 1,069 lost days; 18 arrests and foot pursuit - 1,538 lost work days; 1 stress claim - 51 lost work days; 2 repetitive motion injuries - 225 lost work days; 2 claims relating to training - 195 lost work days; 1 gun shot - 87 lost work days and 1 back stain from duty belt - 64 lost work days.

Incidence Rate

The incidence rate is the number of recordable injuries occurring among a given number of FT workers over a given period of time. This is an indicator of the rate at which workplace accidents are happening in a department. This measure takes into account the # of recordable cases/total hours worked by all employees during a calendar year multiplied by 200,000 employee hours (200,000= 100 workers working 40 hours per week for 50 weeks). The overall incidence rate for the City in 2005 was 17.37. This represents an increase of 3.4% over the incidence rate in 2004.

Dept	Five year Average 2000-2004	2004 Incidence Rate	2005 Incidence Rate
DPW Operations	33.96	41.42	43.45
Fire	24.87	26.30	28.36
Police	12.35	11.43	13.93

Incidence rate, even though an important indicator of the rate at which accidents are happening, varies with total hours worked by employees (this is affected by position reductions and vacancies). If the number of hours worked goes down even if the number of recordable cases remains the same, the incidence rate will be higher.

WC Claims paid

Include the entire cost of all covered injuries on new claims received in a calendar year and expenses paid in that year for injuries received in prior years. This does not include injury pay that comes out of departmental budgets.

Indemnity: cost of lost wages, disability costs, death, litigation and vocational training. 25-28%

Medical: treatment and hospitalization 70%
Adjustments: independent medical evaluations, investigations, medical records request. 3-4%

Dept	WC Exp 2000	2004 Expenditures	2005 Expenditures
City Total	\$5.9M	\$9.2	\$9.8
Total Claims	5,276	4,674	4,445
Average Cost per Claim	1,133	\$1,973	\$2,222

WC Claims paid varies by increases in medical costs, settlements, and other factors outside of the control of the City.

Worker's Compensation Initiatives

During 2005 the Worker's Compensation Section worked extremely hard at developing **increased accountability** at the department's level for creating safe workplaces, reducing injuries and accidents and worker compensation expenses. The City's Central Safety Committee played a vital role in this effort. A summary of 2005 accomplishments and 2006 initiatives is presented below:

- Prepared a statistical report that detailed ten (10) years of Workers Compensation and Safety data for presentation to the Public Safety Committee and for ongoing reporting. A more specific analysis of injuries in the Fire and Police Departments was also prepared at the request of the Committee.
- Identified and communicated the class codes and job titles that generated the most injuries and accidents in the workplace in 2005. Departments were asked to develop plan of action to reduce injuries. The Departments identified were: Fire, Police, Library, Health, Public Works and City Development. The job classifications were:
 - Custodial worker/City Laborer
 - Building Maintenance Mechanics
 - City Laborer Regular and Seasonal
 - City Laborer Electrical
 - Electrical Mechanic
 - Electrical Worker
 - Sewer Laborer 2
 - Parking Checker
 - Communication Asst 3
 - Parking Enforcement Supervisor
 - Water Distribution Repair workers/Laborer
 - Operations Driver/Worker

Urban Forestry Specialist
Sanitation Worker
Public Health Nurse
Library Circulation Aide/Assistant

- Worked with the MFD and MPD in addressing preventable injuries and started discussions regarding light duty policies.
- In 2006 we have initiated discussions to revive the injury review process: increase employee and supervisory accountability, raise safety awareness, engage employee in safety effort, identify repeaters, and formulate corrective action.
- Developed standards for vocational assessments for permanently displaced employees to facilitate return to work options.
- Developed a Worksite Audit form to be used by City Departments to review, monitor and document potential safety hazards in the workplace.
- Provided safety training for Managers and Supervisors regarding their role in developing a safe workplace, hazard identification and accident prevention.
- Developed Policy and Procedures for Reporting Injuries.
- Developed Safety Orientation Checklist for new employees.
- Summarized OSHA/Dept of Commerce Safety Training Requirements
- Facilitated Ergonomic Presentation and posted the documents to the MINT
- Facilitated Safety Presentation and distributed fire safety cards

The Committee will continue to work in 2006 to make recommendations regarding light duty programs, prepare a Safety Newsletter, provide additional training and coordinate activities for National Safety Month. All of these activities are designed to raise awareness regarding safety in the workplace.

It is our belief that in order for these initiatives to succeed all City departments must commit themselves to support the programs and efforts established by the Committee and the Department of Employee Relations by:

- 1) Completing the Worksite Hazard Assessment form and addressing all hazards identified during this process.
- 2) Completing a Job Hazard/Safety Analysis for all job titles identified in this report and submitting a copy of the completed form to the Department Of Employee Relations
- 3) Providing safety orientation to new employees using the Safety Orientation Checklist.
- 4) Reviewing and complying with formal safety training requirements established by the State of Wisconsin for specific job titles.
- 5) Supporting other safety initiatives by directing personnel to attend safety trainings sponsored by DER and other training programs required by the State.
- 6) Participating in the “Injury Review” process for employees who have repeated injuries (Injury Review is the process in which a committee consisting of management, the union, safety specialist and other key personnel meet with an employee who has repeated injuries in order to determine the problems and to brainstorm solutions so that repeat injuries do not continue to occur). DER has statistics regarding repeat injuries and the employees involved.

The Department of Employee Relations and the Central Safety Committee look forward to working with the Public Safety Committee and City departments to address workplace hazards and the reduce injuries and the associated costs.

Sincerely,

Maria Monteagudo
Employee Relations Director