

## Chapter 19

# Labour Relations and Workplace Safety—Strategies to Reduce Injury Rates

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

By February 2020, the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety was issuing its summary offence tickets under occupational health and safety legislation consistent with its policy. Prompt issuance of summary offence tickets reinforces the importance to employers of addressing identified violations to help reduce workplace injuries.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

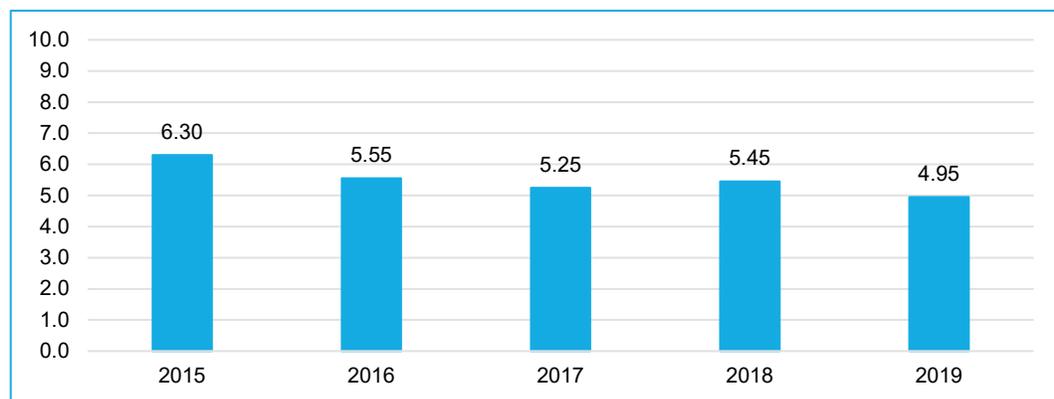
#### 2.1 Background

Fatalities cause irreversible and immeasurable harm to those affected. Injuries result in time lost that affects the injured workers, their employers, and is a cost to society.

The Ministry's mandate is to promote, support and enforce safe work practices and employment standards to ensure healthy, safe and productive workplaces.<sup>1</sup> *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* governs the responsibilities of the Ministry related to occupational health and safety.

As noted in its *2019–20 Annual Plan*, the Ministry has a goal to reduce the total provincial injury rate by 50 percent by March 31, 2020.<sup>2</sup> As **Figure 1** shows, the total injury rate per 100 full-time workers has decreased from 6.30 in 2015 to 4.95 in 2019.

**Figure 1—Total Injury Rate per 100 Full-Time Workers in Saskatchewan<sup>A</sup>**



Source: Adapted from *Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety Annual Report for 2018–19*, p. 5. (2015–2018 rates) and [www.wcbsask.com/saskatchewan-workplace-total-injury-rate-decreases-in-2019/](http://www.wcbsask.com/saskatchewan-workplace-total-injury-rate-decreases-in-2019/) (2019 rate) (20 March 2020).

<sup>A</sup> Annual injury rate is for January 1 to December 31.

<sup>1</sup> *Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety Plan for 2019–20*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> In its *2015–16 Annual Plan*, the Ministry set a goal to reduce the provincial workplace injury rate by 50 percent by 2020 (i.e., reduce the total workplace injury rate to 4.32 per 100 full-time workers by 2020). In its *2019–20 Annual Plan*, the Ministry set a performance measure of 4.6 per 100 full-time workers for this goal.



High workplace injury rates may negatively affect Saskatchewan's reputation as a desirable place to work, as well as negatively affect Saskatchewan's economy through increased health and social costs. Lower workplace injury rates (along with lower total days lost) reduces the cost to businesses through lower WCB premiums. Effective processes, including reducing the number of workplaces with unsafe practices that place workers at risk, will help reduce workplace injuries.

## 2.2 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our follow-up audit of management's actions on the recommendation we made in 2018.

Our *2018 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 6, concluded that, for the 15-month period ended November 15, 2017, the Ministry had, other than the area reflected in the following recommendation, effective processes to implement strategies to reduce provincial workplace injury rates to 4.32 per 100 full-time workers by 2020, as set out in the Ministry's Annual Plan.<sup>3</sup> We recommended the Ministry issue its summary offence tickets under occupational health and safety legislation consistent with its policy.

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Ministry's progress toward meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. Ministry management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To carry out our follow-up audit, we interviewed Ministry staff, and reviewed Ministry policies and information provided to management. For summary offence tickets issued by the Ministry, we analyzed the time taken to issue tickets to determine if the Ministry was issuing tickets consistent with its policy.

## 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION

This section sets out the recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to it, the status of the recommendation at February 14, 2020, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

### 3.1 Summary Offence Tickets Issued Within Specified Timeframe

***We recommended that the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety issue its summary offence tickets under occupational health and safety legislation consistent with its policy.*** (*2018 Report – Volume 1*, p. 84, Recommendation 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement October 10, 2018)

**Status**—Implemented

The Ministry issued summary offence tickets under occupational health and safety legislation consistent with its policy.

<sup>3</sup> The original report regarding this recommendation can be found at [auditor.sk.ca/publications/public-reports](http://auditor.sk.ca/publications/public-reports). We reported the original audit work in *2018 Report – Volume 1* (Chapter 6, pp. 73-86).

In June 2018, the Ministry provided its peace officers with training to help ensure officers issue tickets consistent with its Summary Offence Policy.

In February 2019, the Ministry updated its policy to require peace officers to issue tickets within 60 business days of the date of the offence (previously within 20 business days).

We found requiring issuance of tickets within 60 days is quicker than the requirement of *The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990* of issuing within six months of the offence.<sup>4</sup> In addition, 60 days is faster than Alberta, which requires officers to issue tickets within six months.<sup>5</sup> It is slower than Ontario, which requires officers to issue tickets within 30 calendar days.<sup>6</sup>

Our analysis of summary offence tickets issued by the Ministry, between February 1, 2019 and February 6, 2020, found officers issued summary offence tickets consistent with the 60-day timeframe set out in policy. We found the Ministry issued 23 tickets during this timeframe taking 13 business days on average. The longest period from offence to ticket issuance was 25 business days. As a result of these tickets, the Ministry levied fines of \$20,750.

Each month, the Ministry monitors the timeliness of issuing summary offence tickets as part of its key performance indicators monitoring.

Prompt issuance of summary offence tickets reinforces the importance to employers of addressing the identified violation.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990*, s. 4(3) ([pubsaskdev.blob.core.windows.net/pubsask-prod/1415/S63-1.pdf](https://pubsaskdev.blob.core.windows.net/pubsask-prod/1415/S63-1.pdf)) (2 April 2020).

<sup>5</sup> *The Provincial Offences Procedure Act* (s. 4) ([www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=P34.cfm&leg\\_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779815814&display=html](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=P34.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779815814&display=html)) (24 February 2020).

<sup>6</sup> *The Provincial Offences Act* (s. 3) ([www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p33/](http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p33/)) (24 February 2020).