

Safe and Healthy Workplaces
in Newfoundland and Labrador

WORKPLACE
INJURY
PREVENTION
STRATEGY
2023-2028



WorkplaceNL

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Safe and Healthy Workplaces

Newfoundland and Labrador is a safer place to work today. In 2021, the lost-time injury rate was 1.5 injuries per 100 workers – one of the lowest lost-time injury rates in Canada. Yet, 12 workers were injured every day in 2021 - still far too many.

Newfoundland and Labrador workplaces have accomplished many positive health and safety outcomes. Work-related fatalities have declined, more workplaces are injury-free, awareness of health and safety is increasing and falls from heights have decreased. All due to the continued efforts of workplace parties, safety partners and stakeholders.

However, work is still needed. We need to build on our accomplishments by continuing our efforts in the areas of soft-tissue injuries, traumatic mental health injuries and illnesses, and preventing workplace violence and harassment. We must find new ways to prevent workplace injury and illness, and focus on secondary prevention to prevent further injury and expedite recovery after an injury occurs.

This six-year prevention strategy builds on previous strategies. We focus on our goals of reducing the risk of workplace injury, illness and disease; reducing the impacts on workers and workplaces when injury does occur; and improving safety attitudes and behaviours to advance a strong safety culture in our province.

We all play a part in building safe and healthy workplaces – workers, supervisors, employers, labour and employer organizations, government, safety sector councils, training providers and trainers, safety associations, community partners, researchers, and many others. Employers and supervisors are obligated by law to ensure the health, safety and welfare of workers. Workers are obligated by law to protect their own health and safety as well as that of other workers and persons at or near the workplace.

As in previous years, our partners were instrumental in identifying the priorities reflected in this strategy. Meaningful consultation with our stakeholders contributes to our collective success in reducing workplace injury and illness.

WorkplaceNL and the Occupational Health and Safety Division (OHS Division) of Digital Government and Service NL will continue to work with these partners to promote the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers in creating healthy, safe and respectful workplaces.

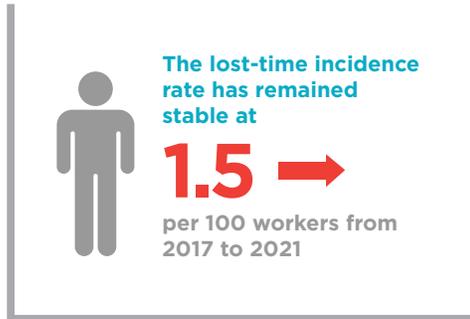
No person or organization can achieve success alone. Safe and healthy workplaces require a collaborative effort.



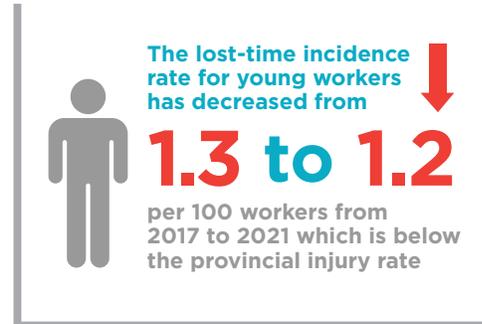
Today

Our progress to date

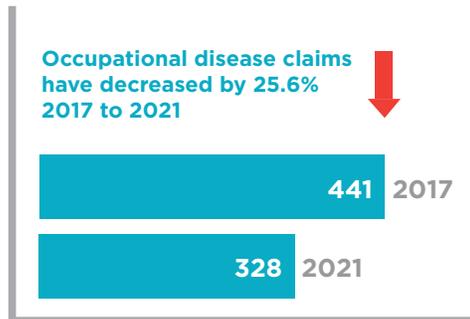
Lost-time Incidence rate



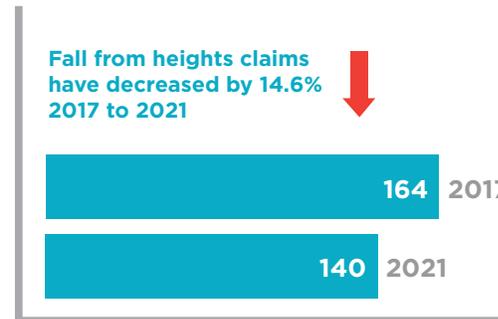
Lost-time incidence rate young workers



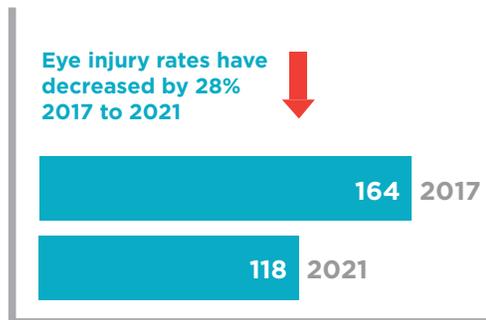
Occupational disease claims



Fall from heights



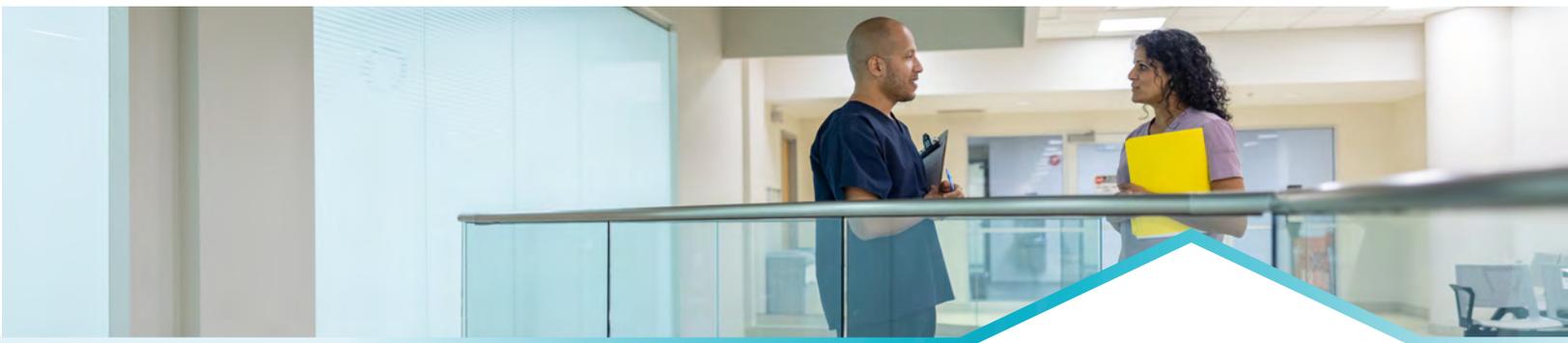
Eye injury rates



Electronic training certificates



*Rates and number of claims are as of March 31 of the respective year.



Challenges and Emerging Issues

There is still work to be done

- Musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs), or soft-tissue injuries, account for more than two-thirds of workplace injuries in our province, with an annual average of \$102 million in claims cost over the last five years.
- Mental health disorder claims have increased from 25 claims in 2017 to 70 claims in 2021.
- Serious injuries continue to be of concern, with an average of 247 claims per year between 2017 to 2021.
- Health Care and Social Services industry accounted for the largest percentage of claims (33 per cent) and costs (24 per cent) in 2021 of all industries.
- OHS Committees are not reporting that they are meeting as frequently as required by legislation.
- The nature of work and the workforce is changing so new or changing safety risks may emerge.



Vision, Goals and Strategic Objectives

Strategic Vision - Healthy workers in safe and productive workplaces

Our goals

1. Reduce the risk of workplace injury, illness, and disease
2. Reduce the impact of injury on workers and workplaces
3. Change safety attitudes and behaviours to advance a strong safety culture



To achieve the goals our strategic objectives are:

1. Champion a culture of health and safety
2. Enhance programs to address the changing workplace
3. Leverage partnerships
4. Provide timely education, training and technology
5. Strengthen enforcement management process



Safe and Healthy Workplaces

Objective 1 - Champion a Culture of Health and Safety



A strong safety culture drives habits to prevent workplace injury and illness

Safety culture is an organization-wide way of working that places high levels of importance on shared safety beliefs, attitudes and values. As “the way we do things around here”, a strong safety culture drives practices for preventing workplace injury and illness.

Health and safety must be recognized as both a legal requirement and an effective business practice in workplaces around the province. WorkplaceNL is committed to support programs and provide knowledge to help workplaces develop a strong safety culture. This includes educating workplaces on culture, supporting workplace parties who contribute to the workplace culture, encouraging industry best practices that support a health and safety culture and providing a means for workplace to measure and identify gaps in their health and safety culture.

Key initiatives

Promote public awareness and leadership engagement

- Promote safety, where and how it catches the attention of workplaces.
- Provide workplace leaders with education and guidance on health and safety.

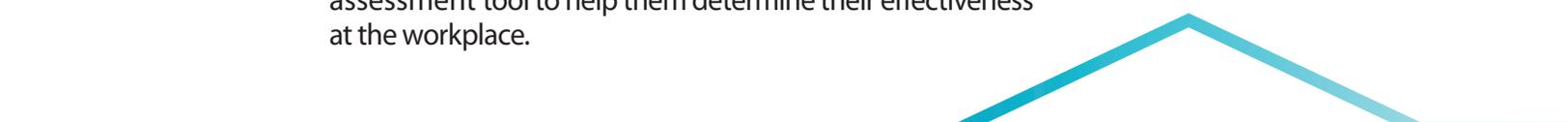
PRIME

- Enhance the Prevention and Return to Work Insurance Management for Employers and Employees (PRIME) program to include OHS educational courses and expanded OHS program requirements.
- Consult with Safety Sector Councils to explore developing industry-specific best practices.

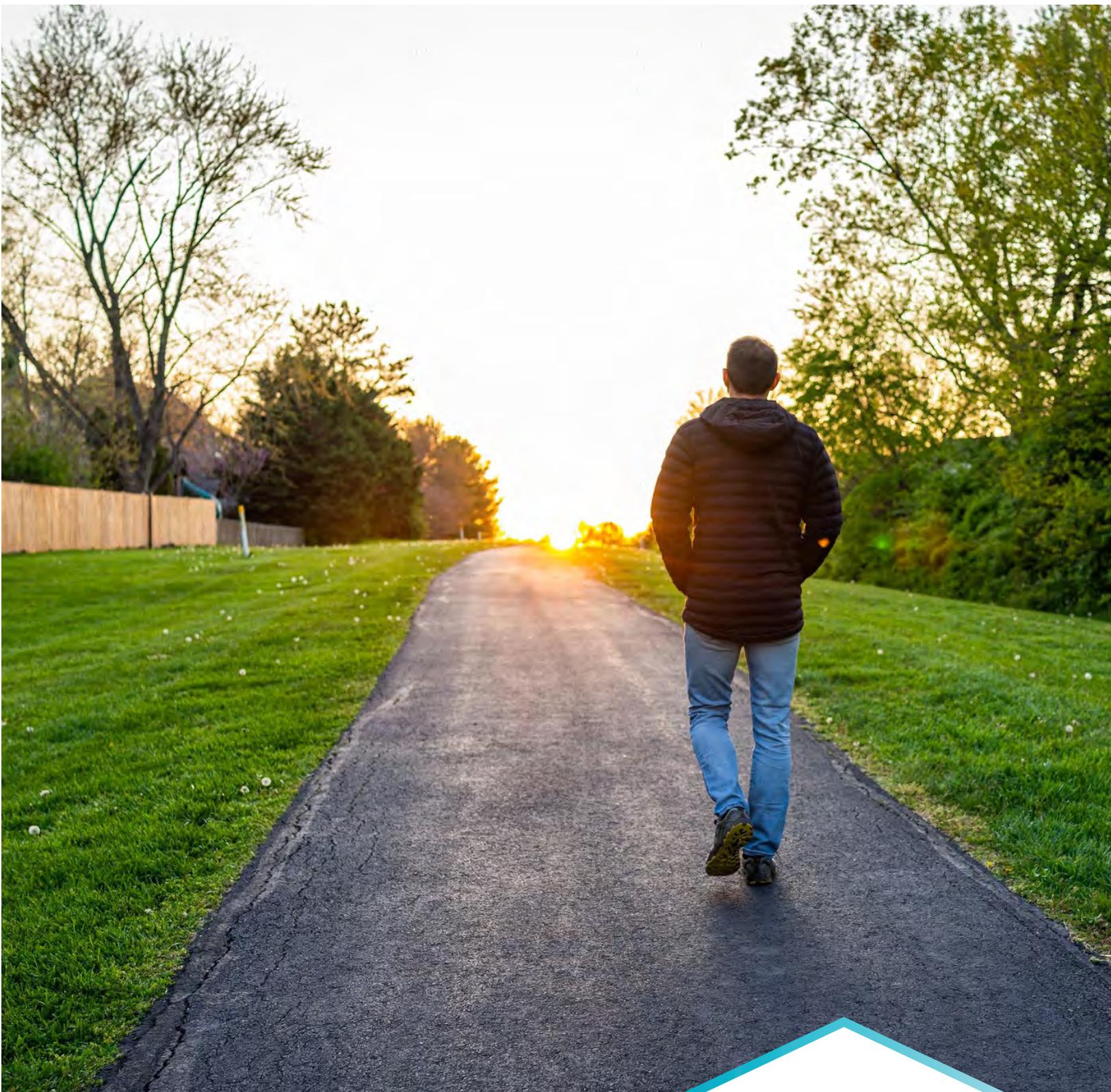
Enhance health and safety awareness and education

- Explore mandatory health and safety training for supervisors.
- Support new supervisors by providing the health and safety knowledge they need.
- Develop health and safety and return-to-work educational materials for employers registered with WorkplaceNL.
- Support health and safety programming from early years to post-secondary, apprenticeship, and trades education.
- Use the Climate Assessment and Audit Tool (CAAT) tool to assess culture in high-risk workplaces and provide guidance on addressing identified gaps.

OHS Committee/Worker Health and Safety (WHS) Representatives and Designates

- Consult with OHS Committees to determine knowledge gaps and training needs, with consideration for emerging health and safety issues, more focus on hazard recognition and mitigation as well as real-workplace experiences.
 - Provide OHS Committees with resources, such as an assessment tool to help them determine their effectiveness at the workplace.
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Objective 2 - Enhance Programs to Address the Changing Workplace



Evolve health and safety approaches to respond to rapid change in today's workplace

The pace of change in today's workplace is increasing exponentially. It is important that we are able to respond to and influence workplace behaviours and outcomes. To do this, we will need to continue to evolve and adapt to change to stay relevant.

WorkplaceNL is committed to support programs and provide knowledge that help workplaces respond to change. This includes educating workplaces on MSI prevention, psychological health and safety, preventing workplace violence and harassment, supporting recovery at work, preventing occupational disease, and assisting vulnerable workers.

Key initiatives

Remote work

- Explore the development of resources that support challenges associated with remote work environments.

Musculoskeletal injury

- Explore practical educational methods to increase awareness and build knowledge of MSI prevention.
- Explore the development of MSI resources for workplaces to reduce disability and optimize function.

Workplace violence, harassment and psychological health and safety

- Support workplaces by providing resources to integrate workplace violence and harassment prevention, as well as psychological health and safety, into their OHS program.
- Promote the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (CSA-Z1003), especially with workplaces with a higher risk for psychological injuries.

Supporting recovery at work

- Collaborate with stakeholders to explore methods to promote recovery at work, which helps prevent long-term disability.
- Educate workplaces on effective return-to-work practices for physical and mental health injuries.
- Innovate to improve quality of care that supports effective recovery from workplace injuries.

Occupational disease

- Enhance PRIME requirements to include an assessment of personal protective equipment for employers requiring an OHS Program.
- Develop resources to guide workplaces in developing programs that prevent occupational disease.

Vulnerable workers

- Educate vulnerable workers on their health and safety rights and responsibilities, injury prevention, and return to work.
- Explore communication tools and mechanisms for educating vulnerable workers.

Objective 3 - Leverage partnerships



Partnerships are valuable and powerful tools in improving health and safety

When safety partners – employers, workers, industry sectors, educators, community agencies, the private sector and various levels of government – work together, they can collectively build effective, sustainable health and safety programs and systems for workplaces in the province.

WorkplaceNL is committed to support internal and external partnerships that help workplaces create a safe and healthy work environment. This includes industry collaboration, community and internal partners, high-risk employers, recognizing safety leadership and supporting research.

Key initiatives

Industry collaboration and community partnerships

- Collaborate with Safety Sector Councils in assessing impact and developing industry-specific educational materials.
- Consult with stakeholders, including the Newfoundland Federation of Labour and the Newfoundland and Labrador Employers' Council, to review workplace violence and harassment prevention in relation to workplace stress.
- Explore opportunities to support groups such as first responders and health care workers.

Internal partnerships

- Foster collaboration within WorkplaceNL and the OHS Division to support psychological health and safety as well as workplace violence, harassment and occupational disease prevention.

Partnering with high-risk employers

- Support and partner with high-risk employers to enhance their OHS programs and complete safety culture assessments.
- Support large employers to create a process to document, review and analyze injury trends to determine opportunities for health and safety improvements in their workplace.

Research

- Support workplace health and safety research to inform innovative, practical and easy-to-implement solutions that support the prevention of workplace injury and illness or re-integration into the workforce post-injury.

Objective 4 - Provide timely education, training and technology



Building awareness and knowledge enables better safety outcomes

Timely education, training and technology are essential to sustainable health and safety programs and systems for workplaces in the province. Education builds awareness and increases knowledge, which enables employers, workers and supervisors to meet their health and safety obligations.

WorkplaceNL is committed to support education, training and technology that helps workplaces create a safe and healthy work environment. This includes focusing on education, technology to deliver education, enhanced certification training and measuring OHS awareness.

Key initiatives

Education

- Use a data-driven approach to identify injury trends for focused education.
- Support small employers with health and safety education to encourage their participation in PRIME.
- Work with safety partners and subject matter experts to deliver health and safety education.

Leveraging technology

- Consult with stakeholders on how to effectively deliver health and safety education.
- Leverage social media to communicate health and safety messaging.

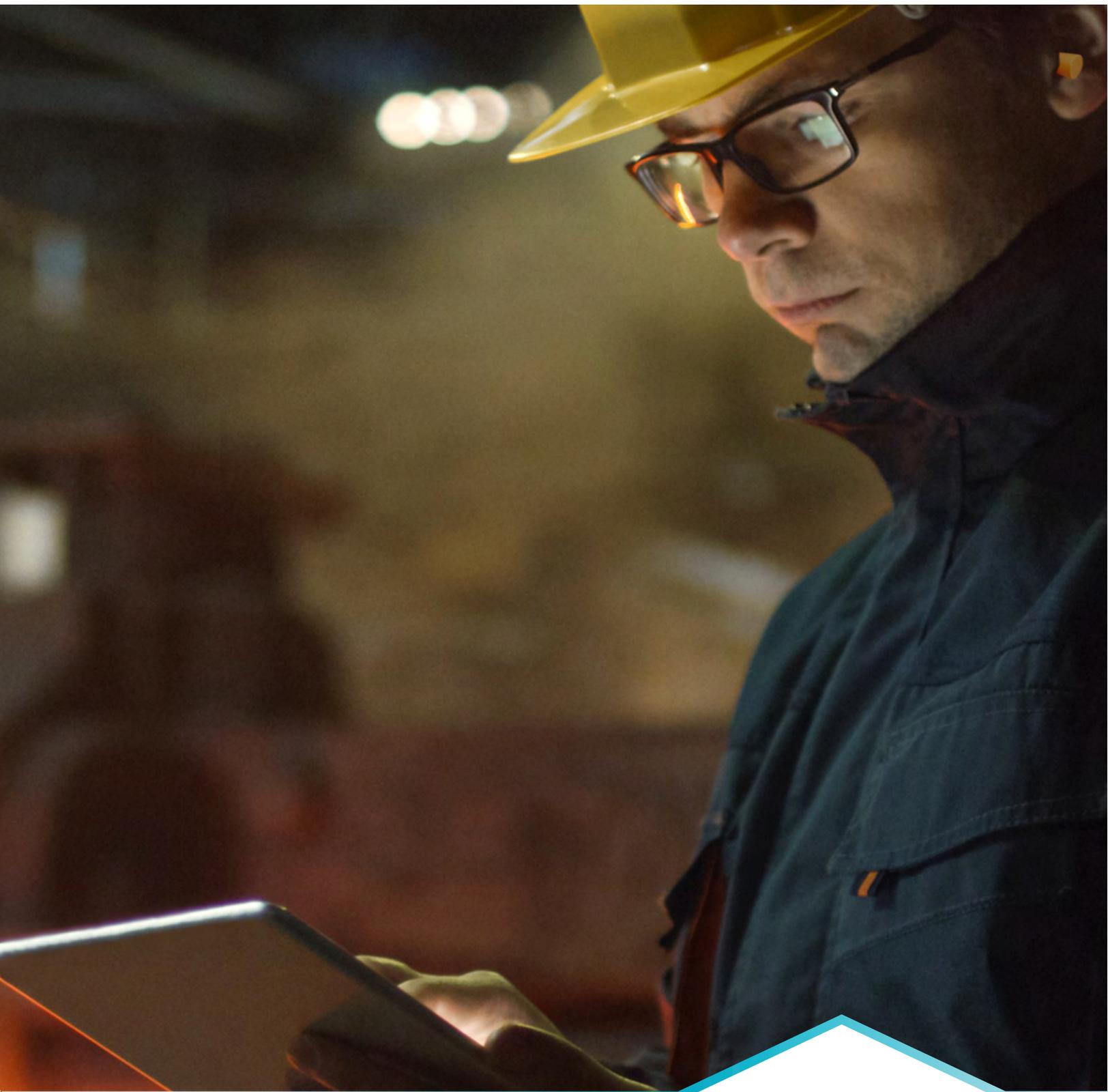
Certification training

- Develop an accreditation process for approved trainers delivering health and safety certification training.
- Implement a new Mine Rescue Certification Training Program.
- Review policies and procedures governing certification training programs.

Measuring OHS awareness

- Publish data and indicators of health and safety on WorkplaceNL's website.
 - Use the OHS Awareness Survey of business owners, supervisors and workers to identify gaps in health and safety education.
 - Review the measures of safety, including serious injury, MSI, mental health and occupational disease to ensure they are current.
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Objective 5 - Strengthen enforcement management process



Equitable, practical and consistent enforcement to protect all workers

The OHS Division of Digital Government and Service NL continues to be committed to ensuring that regulatory and enforcement functions are carried out in an equitable, practical and consistent manner. Fundamentally, this starts with the promotion of a fair and balanced framework of enforcement that protects all workers from workplace hazards.

The OHS Division is committed to providing effective supports in areas of high risk work by means of targeted and focused strategic inspections. The Division also continues to take measures to ensure every workplace in the province complies with the OHS legislation. This is accomplished by providing information in an open and transparent manner, taking firm action when necessary and establishing timely follow-up. In this way, the OHS Division is dedicated to providing regulatory leadership that demonstrates enforcement management practices that are consistent and effective.

The OHS Division will continue to improve upon its enforcement management process and operational efficiency.

Key Initiatives

Planned Inspections

- Continue to focus inspection activities on employers with higher risk work activities.
- Consider length of time between inspection activities when prioritizing enforcement efforts.

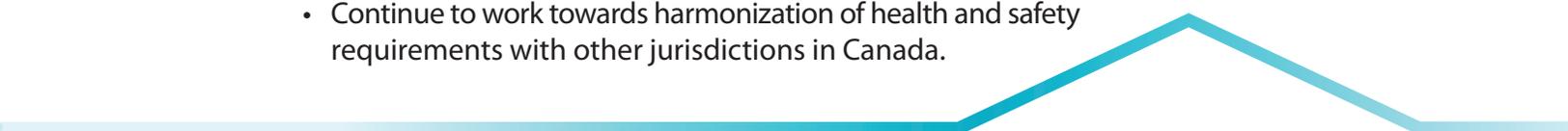
Focused Approach

- Increase enforcement efforts to improve upon compliance of OHS committees.
- Increase enforcement activity to improve upon safety orientation training of new employees.

Occupational Disease

- Strengthen data analysis capability to support continued development and implementation of targeted enforcement strategies for the prevention of occupational disease.

Regulatory and Legislative Review

- Continue to review and make recommendations to improve upon OHS legislation, with particular focus on the radiation health and safety legislation, requirements for OHS committees and workplace health and safety representatives, and the changing workplace (e.g., working from home).
 - Continue to work towards harmonization of health and safety requirements with other jurisdictions in Canada.
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Improved Communication and Collaboration

- Continue work with WorkplaceNL to improve information exchange to develop learning resources that promote a broader understanding of OHS.
- Continue to develop hazard alerts and safety bulletins.
- Continue to participate in councils, associations, sectors and other outreach work.

Technology Improvements

- Continue to work towards developing an online inspection reporting system and a robust web-based system for tracking enforcement activity.

Turning the strategy into action

This six-year strategy provides a framework for WorkplaceNL and the OHS Division to work with its safety partners to plan, coordinate and implement each of the strategy's objectives. Achieving our goals will require a balance of education and enforcement.

The initiatives in this strategy support our intent to create safe workplaces that protect workers from injury and illness, and support a fast recovery if an incident should occur.

WorkplaceNL will regularly report the results of work under this strategy through its annual performance report. Monitoring our performance measures help us drive change, enhance our health and safety programs and identify challenges and opportunities so we can better meet the needs of workplaces in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our key performance measures include (from accepted claims):

- Lost-time Incidence rate.
 - Soft-tissue lost-time incidence rate.
 - Young worker lost-time incidence rate.
 - Workplace violence injury rate.
 - Mental health and disorder rate.
 - Fatality rate.
 - Serious injury rate.
 - Occupational disease rate.
 - Number of claims referred for early and safe return-to-work program.
 - Percentage of claims that return to work within 180 days.
 - Cost of claims that return to work within 180 days.
 - Number of claims that cannot return to work, moved to Extended Earnings Loss (EEL) benefits.
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WorkplaceNL

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