



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 2, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Waste Collection Operations - Supplementary Information on Workplace Injuries (PW15007) - (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

At the May 22, 2014, Public Works Committee meeting staff was directed to report back to the Committee on the following:

Report 14-006 Item 11 (i)(iv) - Staff were directed to report to the Public Works Committee on the corrective actions being taken to address time lost to workplace injuries in the Waste Management Department.

This report provides information on the actions taken by the Operations Division in cooperation with Human Resources to address employee wellness in the Waste Collection Section.

Information:

Staff Report PW14047 was presented to the May 7, 2014, General Issues Committee (GIC) to provide information on the City's waste collection operations. The report included information to address media inquiries of the City's public/contracted service delivery model. The General Issues Committee requested clarification on the lost time injury rates for the Waste Collection Section. Further details on lost time injury rates were provided to Council as part of Information Report, "Waste Collection Operations - Follow up Information to PW14047 (City Wide) - (OPS1407)".

The Waste Collection Section experiences a significantly higher number of injuries compared to other Divisions in the Public Works Department and corporate wide. The injury rate is attributed to the higher risk environment and physically demanding work requirements which involves heavy lifting, repetitive motions, and working in all weather conditions.

Workplace Initiatives

The Operations Division is undertaking several initiatives to focus on employee wellness with the goal of decreasing worker injury rates. Staff has introduced workplace safety improvements, employee safety training, and ensuring that health and safety requirements are prevalent in equipment specifications (e.g. semi-automated tippers, power lift-gates, back-up cameras, ice cleats). More recently, the Waste Collections Section and Human Resources are working collaboratively on several new projects to address employee well-being. These initiatives include the following:

Physical Demands Analysis: An updated Physical Demands Analysis (PDA) for the Waste Collection Operator position was completed in April 2014. The PDA is an ergonomic analysis of the physical requirements to collect various waste materials in different environments such as compact City streets and rural areas.

Return to Work Job Coaching Project: Beginning in November 2014 the Waste Collection Section and Return to Work Section (RTWS) launched a joint project to develop a return to work job coaching project for employees. Staff is currently meeting on a twice per week basis to assess WSIB and short-term/long-term disability case loads. The new project involves:

- Developing a training program to assist employees that have experienced injuries to progress to full duties including an ergonomics and prevention program.
- Reviewing tasks and equipment modifications and other actions to work within the employee's capabilities.
- Reviewing with management and employees the employee's progression during return to work and address any barriers.
- Coaching supervisors on standard precautions as related to injuries.
- Coaching supervisors on how to best approach individuals with behavioural concerns or sudden changes with performance and/or attendance so that they may work with the employee to solve any problems and utilize other resources (e.g. EFAP program, family physician, RTW Specialist).

The Return to Work Section will be dedicating staff time to this project including the use of a kinesiology cooperative position from January 5 to April 30, 2015, to help create the program requirements. This new project will also include training sessions with other employees on ergonomics and prevention of musculoskeletal injuries.

Absence Reporting Internal Audit: The Waste Collection Section is participating in the corporate internal audit to review employee absence reporting protocols. The audit is being coordinated by the City's Audit Services Division to review absence reporting practices among various Sections. The findings from the audit may result in revisions in reporting procedures. The results of the audit are expected to be presented in Q2 2015.

New Technologies

In addition to the above, staff is continuing to work on route optimizations and the corporate Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) system. As reported in Report PW14047a, adopting new route optimization will offer many benefits including enhanced planning capabilities improving balancing workloads. The introduction of the AVL system for the waste collection vehicles will complement our route optimization and service delivery. This in turn will assist staff to address employee health and well-being balancing performance outcomes. The issuance of the RFP for the corporate AVL system is targeted for Q1-2015. The adoption of the route optimization system and the installation of the AVL system on the City's waste collection fleet will support staff initiatives.

The 2015 Waste Capital Budget includes the requests in support of the mitigation of workplace injuries. An allocation for ergonomic improvements targeting exercise and stretching to reduce knee and back injuries has been identified. The kinesiology cooperative position will assist in scoping requirements for equipment and associated resources. Audio-visual equipment and the introduction of computers to the existing training room will complement the enhanced health and safety training as well as the return to work job coaching project. The addition of power-lift gates on waste collection pickup trucks to help with loading heavy objects into the trucks will assist in mitigating injuries. A vehicle wash bay has also been identified in the 2015 capital budget. Cleanliness of vehicles is integral to the reduction of slips and strains.