



## City of Hamilton

# Report for Information

**To:** Chair and Members  
Audit, Finance and Administration Committee

**Date:** April 16, 2026

**Report No:** HUR26005

**Subject/Title:** Annual Employee Absence Report 2025

**Ward(s) Affected:** City Wide

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## Recommendations

- 1) That Report HUR26005 respecting Annual Employee Absences 2025 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

## Key Facts

- This Report provides an overview of the City's occupational claims experience, including lost time injury rate, severity, areas experiencing higher numbers of incidents and strategies to reduce workplace incidents.
- The Report also summarizes non-occupational illness and injury trends, including an analysis of Short-Term Disability (STD) absences, Long-Term Disability (LTD) absences, as well as work accommodation activity.
- The reporting period includes January to December 2025, with comparison data from 2021 through to 2025.

## Financial Considerations

Not applicable.

## Background

Human Resources staff report annually on the City's experience with employee absences related to both occupational and non-occupational claims. In response to Council's direction, this report also provides an analysis of divisions that experience a higher proportion of occupational and non-occupational claims. The 2025 results are presented alongside comparative data for the previous four years to highlight trends, areas of improvement, and divisions requiring further attention.

## Analysis

### *1.0 Occupational Injury Measures*

The tables and graphs below provide an overview of the City's occupational claims experience over the past five years. Occupational claims are managed by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). Lost Time Injury measures include claims approved by the WSIB or where approval is pending, and excludes claims denied by WSIB or abandoned by the employee. In addition, claims from Hamilton Police Services and Hamilton Public Library are outside the scope of this Report.

In this report, the frequency of occupational injuries is expressed through Lost Time Injury Rate. Severity is demonstrated through Lost Time Injury Severity Rate – All Claims and includes days lost that were incurred from new and prior year claims. Refer to Appendix A for definitions.

**Table 1: Lost Time Injuries, Days Lost, Lost Time Injury Rates, Lost Time Injury Severity Rates – All Claims, and Claims Costs from 2021 to 2025**

Year	Average Eligible Employee Headcount	New Lost Time Injuries	Lost Time Injury Rate	Days Lost – New Claims	Days Lost – All Claims	Lost Time Injury Severity Rate – All Claims	Total WSIB Costs
2021	8,380	381	6.12	4,252	14,055	225.58	\$10,409,980
2022	8,433	386	6.00	3,831	13,124	204.12	\$10,022,612
2023	8,774	420	6.40	5,635	15,013	228.92	\$12,504,215
2024	9,034	377	5.59	5,282	16,746	248.35	\$14,672,562
2025	9,485	395	5.61	4,634	16,631	236.22	\$12,807,156

In 2025, the City experienced the following:

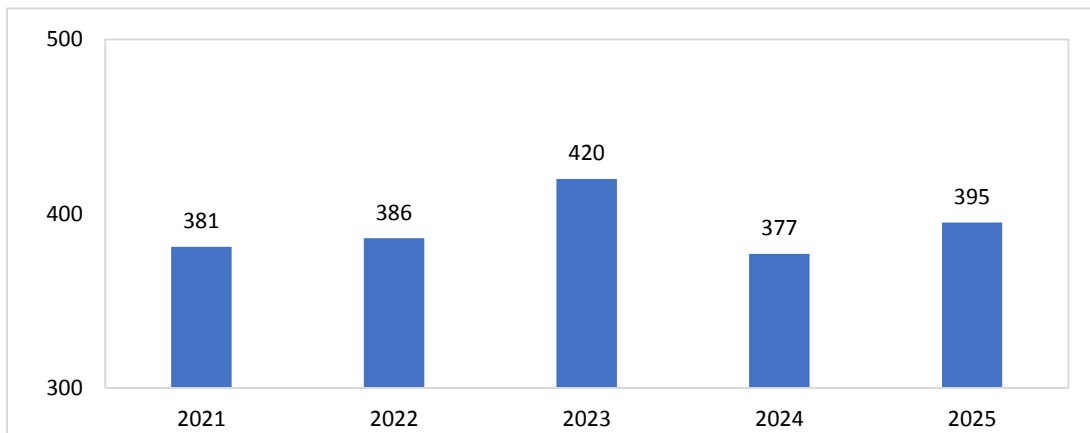
- New Lost Time Injuries increased by 4.8%, from 377 to 395.
- Lost Time Injury Rate increased by 0.4% from 5.59 in 2024 to 5.61.
- Days Lost from New Lost Time Claims decreased by 12.3% from 2024
- Days Lost from All Claims, including new claims and prior year claims continuing to accumulate lost time in 2025, decreased by 0.7% when compared to 2024
- The Lost Time Injury Severity Rate for all claims, which include new and prior year claims continuing to accumulate lost time, decreased by 4.9% from 2024
- Total WSIB costs decreased from \$14,672,562 in 2024 to \$12,807,156, representing a 12.7% decrease.

Human Resources continues to collaborate with operating departments to ensure preventative strategies and mitigation measures are implemented that improve the health, safety and wellness of employees. Activities across the organization include policy and procedure development, communication, training, targeted implementation of

advanced tools, equipment, education and preventive measures all aimed at reducing the frequency and severity of injuries over time.

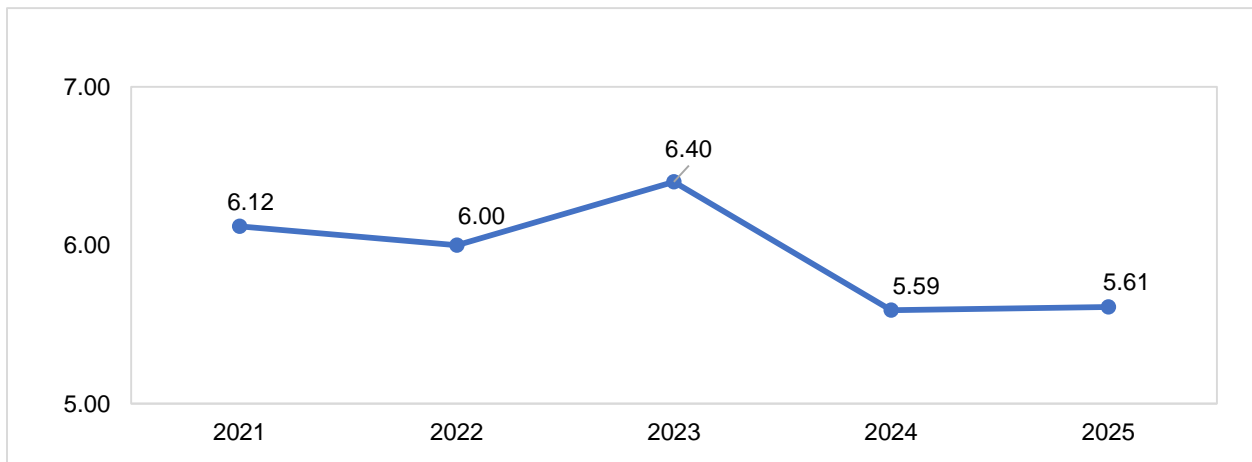
**Graph 1: New Lost Time Injuries from 2021 to 2025**

The number of New Lost Time Injuries increased from 377 in 2024 to 395 in 2025 (+4.8%).



**Graph 2: Lost Time Injury Rate from 2021 to 2025**

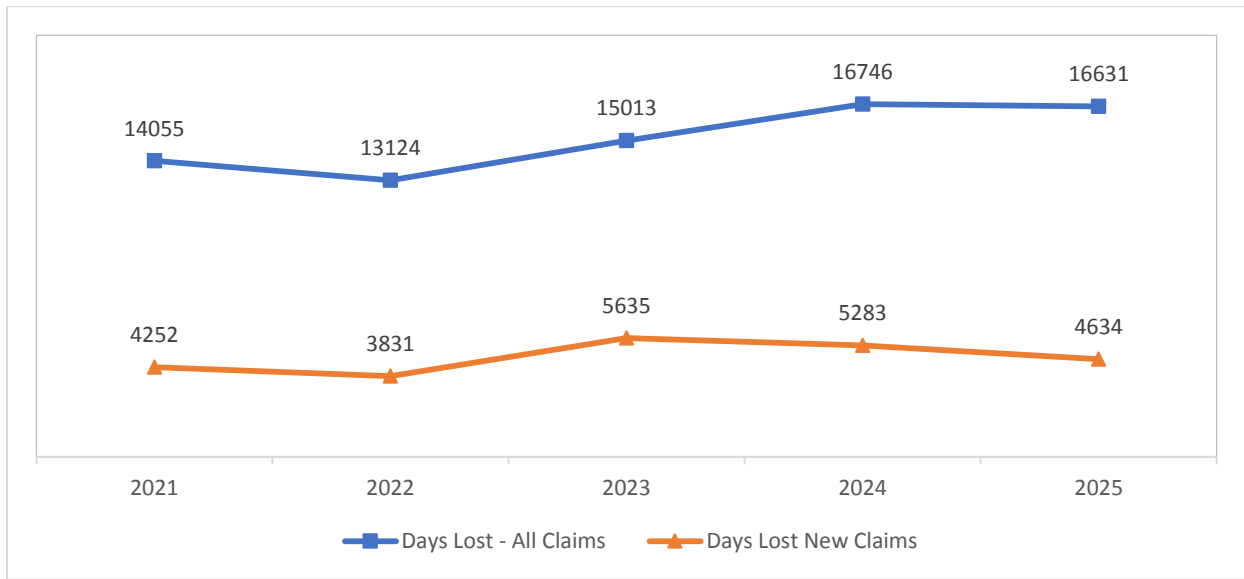
The Lost Time Injury Rate increased in 2025 by 0.4%.



**Graph 3: Number of Days Lost from 2021 to 2025**

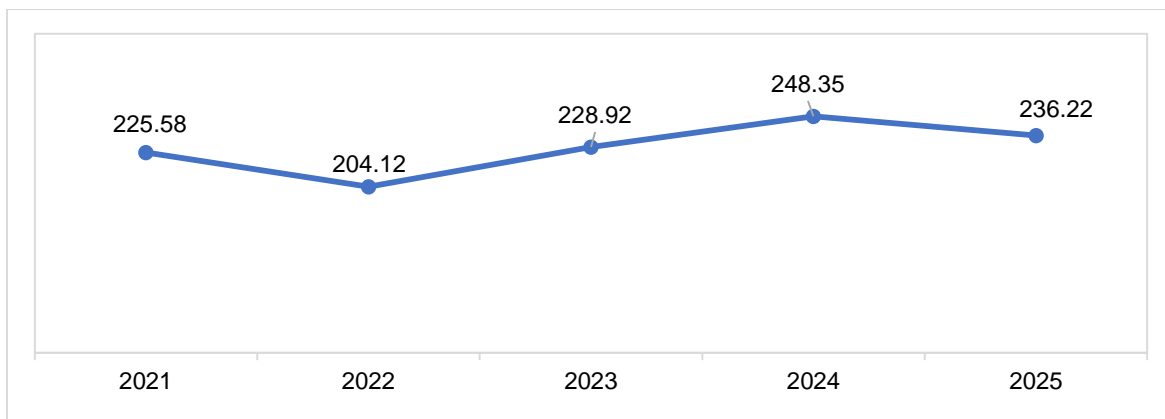
When compared to 2024, the number of days lost for new claims decreased by 12.3% and decreased by 0.7% for all claims in 2025. Data for all claims reported below

includes lost time accrued for claims initiated prior to the current reporting year that continue to accrue lost time until the injury has been resolved.



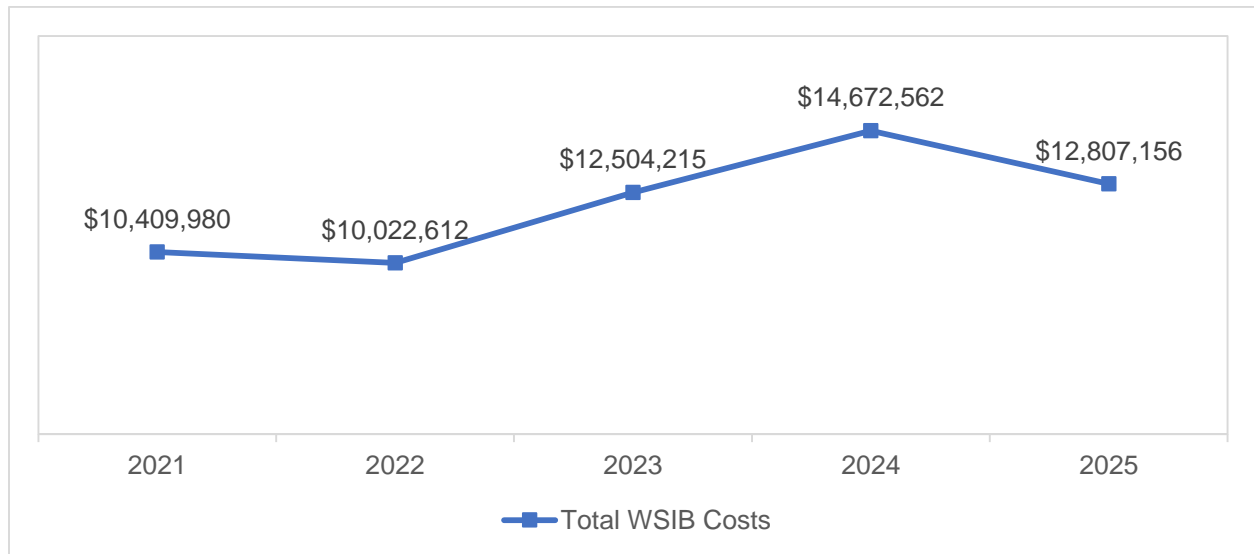
**Graph 4: Lost Time Injury Severity Rate – All Claims from 2021 to 2025**

Although the Lost Time Injury Rate has slightly increased in 2025, the Lost Time Injury Severity Rate for All Claims decreased by 4.9%. Days lost from prior year claims impact the severity rate in the current year. For example, a mental health claim can have lost time incurred over multiple years. Human Resources continues to enhance and facilitate early and safe return to work for employees that has contributed to shorter absences from work and WSIB cost mitigation for the City. Days lost can be impacted by the injury type, the employee's limitations and restrictions and the availability of suitable modified work.



**Graph 5: Total WSIB costs for Occupational Injuries and Illnesses from 2021 to 2025**

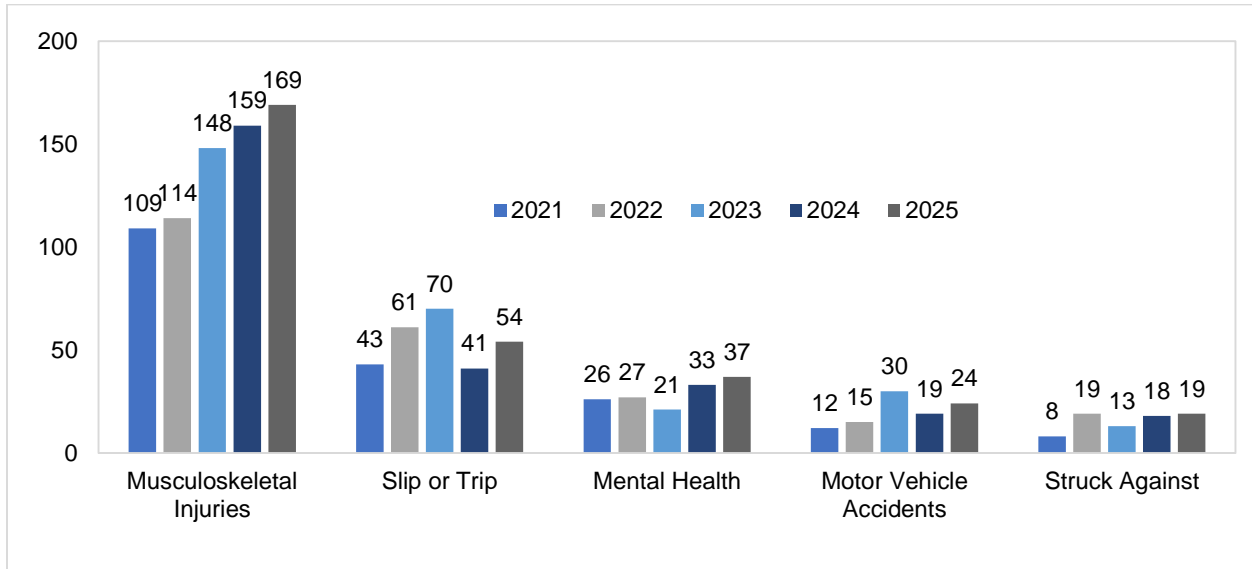
Costs related to all WSIB claims decreased 12.7% (\$1,865,406) in 2025 when compared to 2024. WSIB claim costs include health care and employee loss of earnings, which increased with progression through wage grids and cost of living increases. Loss of earnings also includes lost time incurred in the reporting year from claims initiated in prior years. Costs reported exclude physician, administration fees applied by the WSIB, and bridge benefits paid to employees while their claim is pending.



**Graph 6: Top Five Lost Time Injury Types from 2021 to 2025**

The most common types of Lost Time Injuries in 2025 were Musculoskeletal Disorders, injuries from a Slip or Trip, Mental Health, Motor Vehicle Accidents and Struck Against injuries. When comparing Lost Time Injury types in 2025 with previous years, there were increased injuries observed for all of the most common Lost Time Injuries [Slip or Trip Injuries (+31.7%), Motor Vehicle Accidents (+26.3%), Mental Health (+12.1%), Musculoskeletal Disorders (+6.3%) and Struck Against (+5.6%)].

Musculoskeletal Disorders remain the leading Lost Time Injury type in 2025, making up over 45% of all Lost Time Injuries. Much of the City’s injury prevention work has focused on reducing the risks associated with ergonomic hazards and poor body mechanics.



**Overall Lost Time Injuries by Department from 2021 to 2025**

The tables below include departmental statistics related to Lost Time Injury Rate and Lost Time Injury Severity Rate.

**Table 2: Lost Time Injury Rate from 2021 to 2025**

	Lost Time Injury Rate				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
City Housing Hamilton	2.96	4.35	3.62	1.99	2.46
City Manager’s Office	0.89	0	0.81	0	0.75
Healthy and Safe Communities	8.76	8.71	7.74	8.10	7.78
Corporate Services	0.46	0	0.42	0.40	0.37
Planning & Economic Development	1.68	2.29	1.17	1.98	1.42
Public Works	5.57	5.27	7.78	5.18	5.72
<b>Corporation Total</b>	<b>6.12</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>6.40</b>	<b>5.59</b>	<b>5.61</b>

**Table 3: Lost Time Injury Severity Rate – All Claims from 2021 to 2025**

**1.1 Operational Areas of Focus**

	<b>Lost Time Injury Severity Rate – All Claims</b>				
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
City Housing Hamilton	175.62	28.27	351.85	275.71	357.83
City Manager’s Office	22.15	0	109.19	219.18	221.66
Healthy and Safe Communities	238.96	222.34	239.73	266.09	242.14
Corporate Services	86.49	88.64	57.14	91.56	49.65
Planning & Economic Development	31.53	34.39	74.68	47.45	21.26
Public Works	283.73	255.45	276.84	297.79	312.80
<b>Corporation Total</b>	<b>225.58</b>	<b>204.12</b>	<b>228.92</b>	<b>248.35</b>	<b>236.22</b>

As per previous Council direction, this report provides updates from specific operational areas that account for a larger proportion of lost time injuries and illnesses. The updates include strategies and initiatives established to address occupational injuries and illnesses.

**Table 4: Lost Time Injury Count by Division from 2021 to 2025**

	<b>Lost Time Injury Count</b>				
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Hamilton Fire Department	53	31	51	47	55
Hamilton Paramedic Services	85	86	73	98	106
Hamilton Street Railway	78	72	109	82	76
Long-Term Care	90	113	73	64	43

Injury trend analyses from 2021 to 2025 and initiatives to prevent and mitigate injuries for these divisions are available in Appendix B.

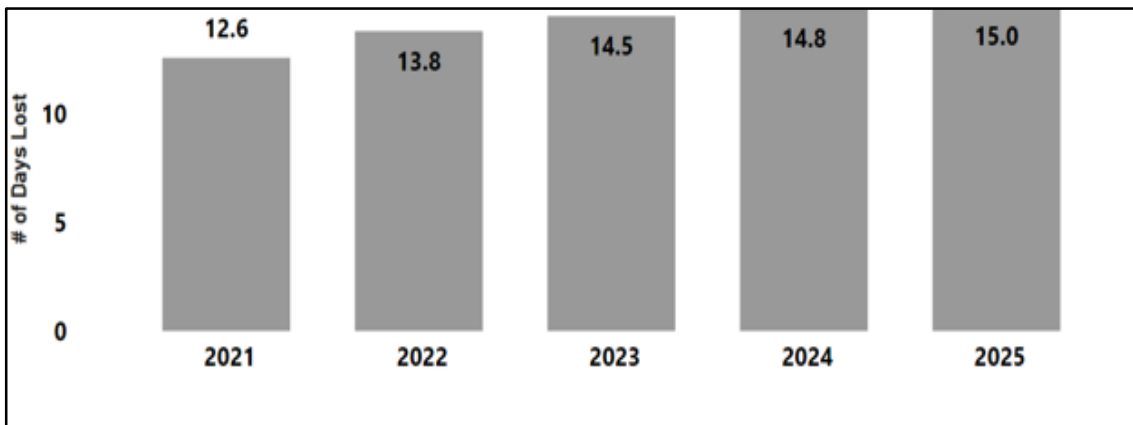
**2.0 Short-Term Disability (STD) Absence Summary (excluding Fire, Police & Library)**

The tables and graphs below provide an overview of the City’s STD absence experience over the past five years, both City- wide and by department. The analysis also includes an overview of absence duration and occurrence rates for 2025. All information excludes absence data from Hamilton Police Services, Hamilton Fire, and the Hamilton Public Library.

Fire sick data has historically been excluded from City-wide reporting as Fire employees’ sick bank has different collective agreement provisions regarding entitlement when compared to other union groups. STD absence data by department and top five divisional levels can be found in Appendix D.

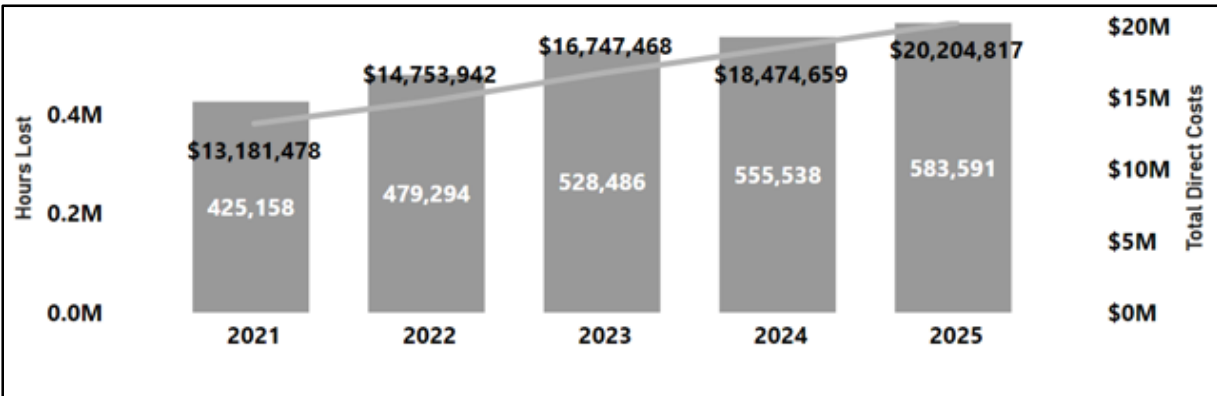
In 2025, the City had 5,556 employees eligible for income protection plan benefits. This is an increase of 188 employees compared to 2024. For consistency across varying work schedules, the average STD days lost per eligible employee is calculated using a standard seven- hour shift.

**Graph 7: Average STD Days Lost per Eligible Employee from 2021 to 2025**



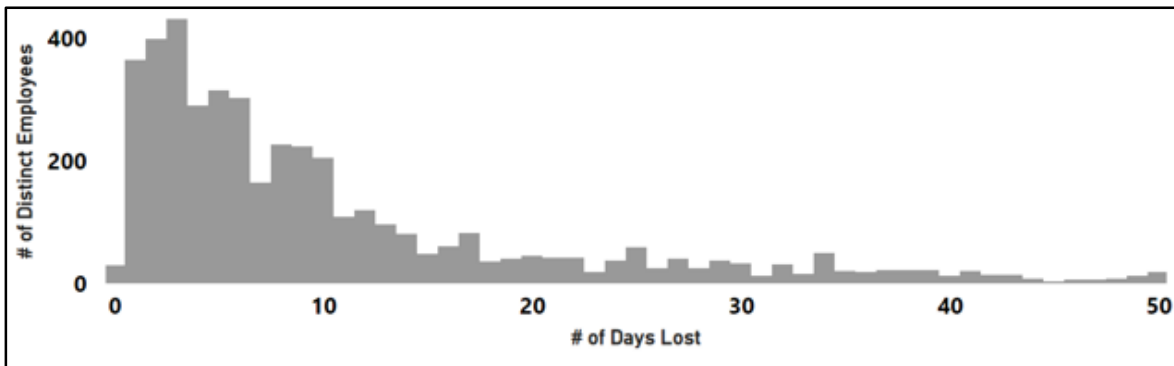
City-wide average number of STD days lost per eligible employee in 2025 was 15.0. This represents a 1.4% increase compared to 2024. Over the last three years, STD days lost has been relatively stable, with only small increases year over year.

**Graph 8: STD Lost Time and Direct Costs from 2021 to 2025**



Compared to 2024, direct STD costs increased by 9.4% in 2025, driven primarily by wage growth (grid progression and cost-of-living adjustments) and a larger number of employees participating in the sick plan; average STD utilization rose only modestly (+1.4%).

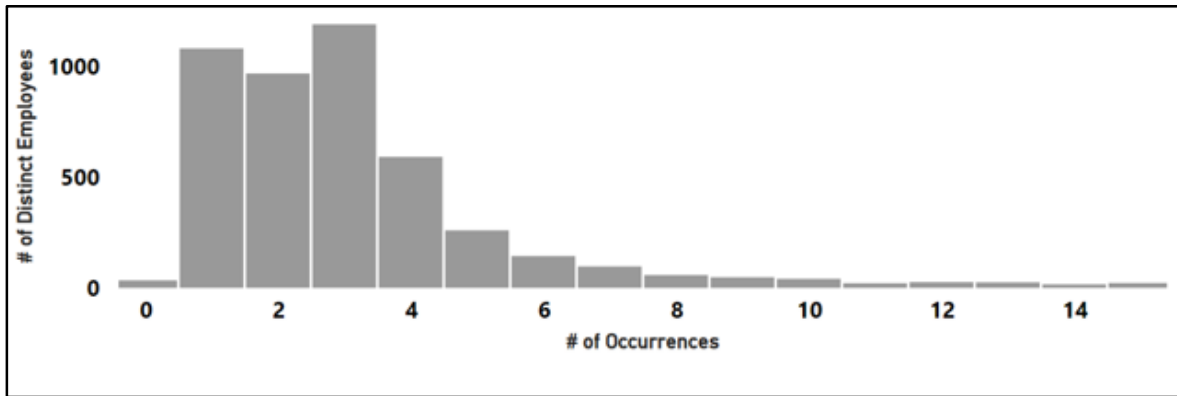
**Graph 9: Employee Distribution by Number of STD Days Lost for 2025**



Graph 9 illustrates the distribution of STD days lost for City employees in 2025. Most employees experienced relatively few STD days lost, with absences concentrated between 1 and 10 days in duration. This outcome is expected, in part due to the influence of two factors: the requirement to provide a doctor’s note on the fourth day of absence and the requirement to provide a STD claim form on the sixth or eighth day of absence, as per collective agreement and policy requirements. In many cases,

employees are able to return to work prior to documentation being required by Human Resources.

**Graph 10: STD Occurrence Distribution for 2025**



Graph 10 illustrates the distribution of STD occurrences among City employees in 2025. Most employees experienced between one and four STD occurrences, with the highest concentration at three occurrences. This is a consistent trend identified each year and is likely explained by collective agreement or policy provisions that incorporate a reduction in compensation on the fourth and subsequent occurrences in a calendar year.

**Table 5: Absence Summary by Department – Average STD Days Lost per Eligible Employee**

	Average STD Days Lost Per Eligible Employee				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
City Wide Data (excluding Fire, Police, Library)	12.5	13.7	14.4	14.8	15.0
City Housing Hamilton	13.6	12.2	15.0	12.6	15.9
City Manager’s Office	1.1	5.7	5.5	7.8	7.5
Healthy and Safe Communities	14.3	15.3	16.4	17.5	17.1
Corporate Services	5.4	6.0	7.4	8.0	8.0

Planning & Economic Development	7.8	8.8	9.4	9.0	8.9
Public Works	14.4	15.9	15.9	16.3	16.7

***Absence Summary by Division (Top 5)***

The following divisions recorded the highest average STD days lost in 2025:

1. Hamilton Paramedic Services: 25.3 days (Decreased from 28.6 in 2024)
2. Transit: 22.6 days (Increased from 22.1 in 2024)
3. Long Term Care: 20.0 days (Stable; was 19.9 in 2024)
4. Transportation: 15.6 days (Decreased from 16.5 in 2024)
5. Environmental Services: 14.7 days (Increased from 14.1 in 2024)

Further data for the top five divisional levels can be found in Appendix D.

***3.0 Long-Term Disability Absences***

LTD absences are non-occupational illnesses or injuries that extend beyond 130 days and are managed by a third party (Manulife).

In 2025, incoming LTD claim volume declined compared to both 2023 and 2024, with a total of 71 claims received. Mental Health conditions continued to represent the largest diagnosis category accounting for 32% of claims received in 2025, remaining below industry comparators (similar employers in the municipal and public sector as determined by Manulife). Although it continues to be the largest diagnostic category, there has been a reduction in the number of mental health related LTD claims in the past 3 years. To support this trend, Human Resources is continuing to advance initiatives outlined in the Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Report. (HUR26007). Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions remained the second-most common category accounting for 30% of received claims in 2025. The incidence of approved claims also decreased in 2025, reaching 13.82 per 1,000 employees, down from 14.80 in 2024.

Return to work outcomes remained positive, with 35 members, representing 59.3% of resolved claims, successfully returning to work. Overall, LTD claim durations remained stable at an average of 38.4 months and continued to perform better than industry comparators, which report an average claim duration of 49.8 months.

**Table 6: Long-Term Disability Claims Data from 2021 to 2025**

Data	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
New LTD Claims	54	70	75	80	71
LTD Active Claims at the end of Q4 by Year	224	211	220	233	246
Incident rate for new claims per 1000 employees	11.47	14.87	14.01	14.80	13.82
LTD Costs (monthly benefit payments, administrative fees, legal fees, vacation payouts and severances)	\$7,944,549	\$8,778,436	\$9,188,641	\$8,905,185	\$9,275,493

**Table 7: Long-Term Disability Claims Received by Diagnosis - 2023 to 2025**

Claim Type	2023			2024			2025		
	MH	MSK	CAN	MH	MSK	CAN	MH	MSK	CAN
City of Hamilton	41%	24%	8%	38%	31%	8%	32%	30%	14%
Industry Comparator	38%	26%	10%	42%	26%	10%	42%	25%	11%
MH = Mental Health                      MSK = Musculoskeletal                      CAN = Cancer *Claim type for new claims received in year									

## 4.0 Absence Mitigation Strategies and Measures

Human Resources is dedicated to fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive work environment for all employees. In addition to strategies and initiatives at the departmental and divisional level, Human Resources undertakes absence prevention and mitigation initiatives across the organization.

### **Workplace Accommodation Activity**

Human Resources continues to manage comprehensive Return to Work programs that ensure employees who have experienced illness or injury can reintegrate into the workplace on a safe and timely basis. The Return to Work Services' team coordinates accommodations and creates structured plans for returning to work. In addition to these efforts, the team ensures that the City's practices meet legal requirements under the Human Rights Code regarding the duty to accommodate. The focus on accommodation efforts reflects the City's dedication to maintaining a resilient and adaptable workforce.

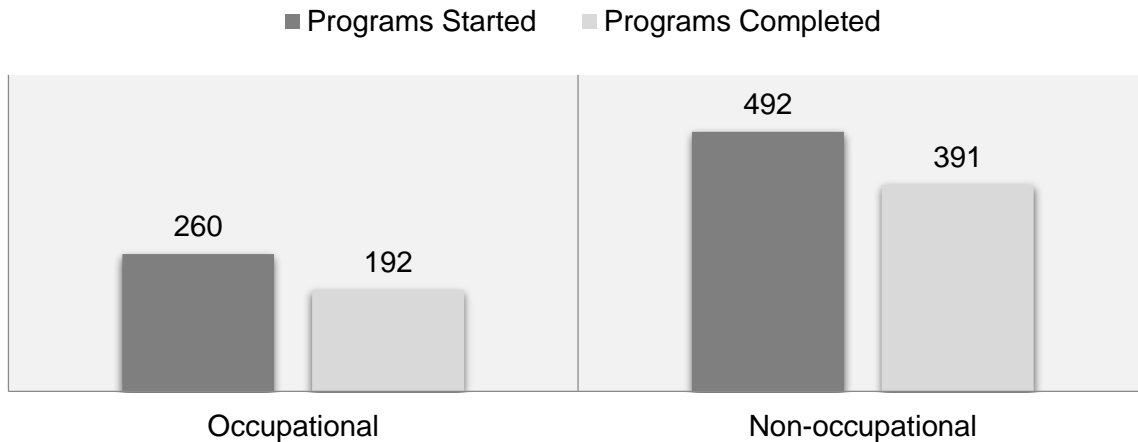
### **Table 8: Overview of Workplace Accommodation Activity from 2021 to 2025**

In 2025, Human Resources closed a total of 657 accommodation cases. These closures are for requests made in 2025 and in prior years. This represents a decrease in closure volume compared to 2024 (758 cases). However, the success rate of closure outcomes remains high, with the majority of employees returning to full duties.

<b>Accommodation Outcomes</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Return to work full duties own position	498	606	587	630	564
Permanent accommodation own position	1	3	3	6	6
Permanent accommodation new position	3	14	10	7	7
Accommodation no longer available or not suitable	6	9	21	23	16
Recurrence or employee is totally disabled	59	63	67	64	38
Other (e.g., retired, maternity leave, resigned)	37	56	29	28	26
<b>Total Accommodation Cases Closed</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>657</b>

**Graph 11: Workplace Accommodation Programs Started and Completed in 2025**

In 2025, Human Resources received 752 requests for accommodation by employees needing assistance in staying at work or returning to work: 260 accommodations arising from occupational claims and 492 accommodations arising from non-occupational (STD) claims.



- Consistent with prior years, the Return to Work Services team within Human Resources continues to engage third-party providers such as occupational physicians, psychologists, occupational therapists, and ergonomists to aid in claims management and to help facilitate early and safe return to work. Partnering with these providers assists in an employee’s recovery, reduce the risk of re-injury, and ensure accommodations are in place to support the employee’s return to work.
- The Hamilton Fire Department Leadership Team, together with Return to Work Services in Human Resources, continues to proactively identify opportunities to support early and safe return to work outcomes for Fire employees. This work is supported by a dedicated Return to Work Specialist assigned to the Hamilton Fire Department. Fire services employees face unique physical and psychological demands that require specialized understanding of occupational requirements, functional abilities, and accommodation options. The dedicated Return to Work Specialist develops tailored plans that align employee medical

restrictions and functional capabilities with operational needs, job requirements, and shift schedules.

- With Council approval in 2024, Hamilton Paramedic Services proceeded with the recruitment of a Scheduling and Attendance Program Manager. Throughout 2025, the Program Manager has worked in partnership with the dedicated Return to Work Specialist and the Paramedic Supervisor supporting employee health and wellness to implement attendance management practices, support early and safe return to work planning, and increase the level of individualized support available to employees. In addition, increased coordination between stakeholders has supported earlier intervention and reduced the operational impact of absences on paramedic scheduling. Together, these efforts have resulted in a measurable reduction in STD days lost, from 28.6 in 2024 to 25.3 in 2025.
- In response to the unique and critical staffing needs within the City's long-term care homes, a dedicated Return to Work Specialist has been added to support the Lodges. This Return to Work Specialist provides assistance to staff requiring return to work coordination and accommodation support. As this dedicated resource was introduced in 2025, it is too early to assess any impact on STD days lost. However, early feedback from Lodges' staff has been positive, highlighting the increased availability and enhanced support accessible through this resource.
- As a result of the increasing STD days lost within Transit, the Absence Management Specialist, together with the designated Return to Work Specialist are developing an Attendance Management Pilot Program to commence in 2026. This non-disciplinary, supportive program is designed to help employees access the resources they need to improve their attendance. The program will aim to reduce STD days lost, decrease STD-related costs, and support overall service delivery within the division.

***Absence and Injury Prevention Activities***

Human Resources works closely with departments and divisions to develop, implement, and maintain absence and injury prevention initiatives across the organization.

Highlights of activities accomplished in 2025 include:

- In September 2025, each Division began receiving dynamic quarterly Occupational Health and Safety Key Performance Indicator Reports designed to support data-driven decision making and identify risks, trends and corrective actions.
- On behalf of the organization, manage all interactions with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development Inspectors including:
  - 2 workplace fatalities
  - 23 critical injuries (see Appendix C 2025 Critical Injury Listing)
  - 50 occupational illnesses
  - 1 work refusal
  - 6 complaints
- Manage and oversee the organizational wide review and update of
  - Health, Safety and Wellness Policy
  - Violence in the Workplace Prevention Policy
  - Violence in the Workplace Prevention Procedure
  - Critical Injury Reporting Procedure
  - Exposure to Blood, Body Fluid or Contaminated Sharps Procedure
  - Hybrid Work Policy
- Health, Safety and Wellness webpage on Howi is regularly updated to include the most up to date information on a vast array of health and safety topics. Employees and leaders can find policies, procedures, guidelines, resources and tools to support injury and illness prevention and compliance.
  - 20 new health, safety and wellness resources were developed and published such as Occupational Health and Safety Bulletins about Thermal Comfort, Ergonomics, Asbestos, Personal Safety Alarms,

Guideline for Appropriate and Proper Fitting Personal Protective Equipment, etc.

- 8 existing resources were updated to ensure employees and leaders are provided with valuable current information about injury prevention. For example, Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls, Winter Roads and Driving, Understanding the Role of the JHSC, Monthly Wellness Bulletins for People Leaders and Employees, etc.
- Provided oversight and communication to leaders enabling compliance with changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act such as the new Working for Workers Five and Six Acts.
- Managed the Corporate Respiratory Fit-testing Program and delivered services to 60 employees.
- Delivered 13 influenza clinics with 317 vaccines administered.
- Developed a Job Hazard Analysis training and tool to assist leaders with identifying and mitigating workplace hazards. 12 people leaders were formally trained on the Job Hazard Analysis Tool.
- Hosted the City's Health, Safety and Wellness Appreciation Day in October for 84 attendees. This highly successful event enables Joint Health and Safety Committee and Critical Incident Peer Support team members to foster connections across divisions while also gaining valuable knowledge and skills to apply in their workplace.
- 165 supervisors completed the leader learning program that enables supervisors to understand their responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and how to apply them in the workplace.
- 472 people leaders completed the required online leader health and safety awareness training for supervisors; 2052 front-line staff completed the required online training for workers. The training ensures leaders and employees are aware of their rights and duties under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- Emergency response drills were held at City Hall to support employees with applying knowledge gained through formal training.

- 375 employees were trained in the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training program. The program includes hazard classification system for workplace chemical safety symbols, labelling and information sheets in our workplaces.
- Delivered Work Refusal training for 97 leaders and employees at Hamilton Water.
- Human Resources continues to work on implementing the City's Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy approved in 2023. An update on the strategy is available in HUR26007.

## **Alternatives**

Not applicable.

## **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

This information report contributes to Council's Priorities by supporting Responsiveness and Transparency enabling strategic decisions involving employee absences contributing to building a high performing public service.

## **Previous Reports Submitted**

- Annual Employee Absence Report 2024 HUR24005 City Wide

## **Consultation**

Leaders from the operational areas of focus identified in this report were consulted and include:

- Dave Cunliffe, Fire Chief, Hamilton Fire Department, Healthy and Safe Communities

- Russell Crocker, Director/Chief of Hamilton Paramedic Service, Healthy and Safe Communities
- Nancy Purser, Director, Transit, Public Works
- Holly Odoardi, Senior Administrator, Long Term Care Division, Healthy and Safe Communities

## **Appendices and Schedules Attached**

Appendix A: Definitions

Appendix B: Incident trend analysis for operational areas of focus

Appendix C: Critical Injury Listing 2025

Appendix D: STD Absences by Department and Top 5 Divisions

### **Prepared by:**

Yakov Sluchenkov, Director, Employee Health & Labour Relations  
City Manager's Office, Human Resources

Iva Peressini, Manager, Health, Safety and Wellness Services  
City Manager's Office, Human Resources

Heather McNicol, Manager, Return to Work Services  
City Manager's Office, Human Resources

### **Submitted and Recommended by:**

Lora Fontana, Executive Director of Human Resources  
City Manager's Office, Human Resources