

Annual Report

2024-25

Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Letters of Transmittal



The Honourable Jim Reiter
Minister of Labour
Relations and Workplace
Safety

Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

I respectfully submit the Annual Report for the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jim Reiter', written over a faint circular stamp.

Jim Reiter
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety



Veronica Gelowitz
Deputy Minister of Labour
Relations and Workplace
Safety

The Honourable Jim Reiter
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Dear Minister:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica Gelowitz', written over a faint circular stamp.

Veronica Gelowitz
Deputy Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Ministry Overview

Mandate

The ministry promotes, supports and enforces safe work practices and employment standards. It fosters a fair and balanced employment environment that respects the rights, duties and responsibilities of employees and employers, thereby ensuring healthy, safe and productive workplaces.

Mission

The ministry supports sustained economic growth and prosperity through the provision of a range of services that encourage, promote and enforce safe work practices and employment standards, which foster a fair and balanced employment environment that respects the rights, duties and responsibilities of employees and employers, thereby ensuring healthy, safe and productive workplaces.

Programs

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) promotes safe and healthy workplaces through interactions with employers and workers, inspects worksites to enforce safety regulations and conducts investigations of serious incidents and fatalities.

Employment Standards ensures employers and employees are aware of, and comply with, employment standards legislation and regulations. The branch delivers educational outreach programs on rights and responsibilities related to employment standards and administers the Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course required for youth aged 14-15 before they can be employed.

Labour Relations and Mediation provides mediation and conciliation services to advance fair and equitable labour relations within Saskatchewan. The branch assists employers and unions in resolving protracted disputes that arise in union management relationships, employee relationships, investigations and collective bargaining. The branch also provides training and facilitates negotiation processes between employers and unions.

Injured Worker Appeal Services (IWAS) is mandated and established under *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013*. The branch works to provide timely independent advice, guidance and services to injured workers or their dependents when they disagree with a decision of the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) on their claims.

The Ministry's 2024-25 Business Plan is available at Publications Saskatchewan at <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/123244>.

Progress on Goal 1: Reduce the provincial time-loss injury rate by 25 per cent by 2030, with the ultimate target being Mission: Zero

We are committed to keeping our workplaces healthy and safe and ensuring that everyone comes home safely at the end of the workday. As the province looks to grow and create 100,000 new jobs by 2030, a focus on reducing serious workplace injuries and fatalities is critical. Everyone benefits when there are zero workplace injuries and fatalities, and having a low injury rate provides a competitive advantage for Saskatchewan employers. The ministry will continue to promote workplace safety and ensure workplaces are following health and safety legislation.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Continue targeted intervention strategy with focus on:

- Highest risk workplaces
- Most serious injuries
- Most vulnerable workers

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Refresh the priority employer program to focus on prevention to drive compliance.
 - A review of the priority employer program was completed in January 2025. The review demonstrated the consistent effectiveness of the program and made several recommendations, including expanding the program and promoting the benefits of the program more broadly.
- Continue directed inspections, with a focus on employers with serious injury and/or high time loss injury rates.
 - The OHS branch conducted 804 healthcare worksite visits, a decrease of 1.1 per cent from 2023-24. This amounts to 13.4 per cent of the total worksite visits conducted by the branch. The total injury rate for the provincial healthcare sector increased by 1.9 per cent from 5.68 per cent in 2023 to 5.79 per cent in 2024.
 - The branch also conducted 1,196 construction worksite visits, an increase of 0.8 per cent from 2023-24. This amounts to 19.9 per cent of the total worksite visits conducted by the branch. The total injury rate for the construction sector was 5.98 per cent in 2024, a 7.6 per cent increase from the 2023 rate of 5.56 per cent.
 - In addition, the branch conducted 514 manufacturing worksite visits, an increase of 23.3 per cent from 2023-24. This amounts to 8.6 per cent of the total worksite visits. The total injury rate for the sector was 5.4 per cent in 2024, a 6.4 per cent decrease from the 2023 rate of 5.77 per cent.
 - In total, the OHS branch conducted 2,200 directed worksite visits across 42 industries and 164 priority employer worksite visits along with 772 other targeted worksite visits for a total of 3,136 targeted employer worksite visits, an increase of 23.7 per cent from 2023-24.
 - The branch issued 346 stop work orders and 57 summary offence tickets in 2024-25.

- Continue to implement and evaluate the *WorkSafe Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy 2023-2028*.
 - The strategy continues to promote the elimination and prevention of occupational injury and disease and details two central streams of work that will be undertaken to reduce injuries and fatalities: a regulatory and enforcement stream and a prevention and learning stream.
 - As part of the strategy, OHS focused on the three priority workplace sectors: healthcare, transportation and construction.
 - In healthcare, OHS conducted prevention focused inspections for violence and musculoskeletal injuries.
 - In the transportation sector, OHS has been identifying higher risk employers through selection criteria based on WCB claim data which includes provincially regulated transportation companies.
 - In construction, OHS focused on scaffold and fall hazard inspections, asbestos related inspections in residential construction, as well as identifying higher risk worksites through targeted intervention methodology.
- Together with the WCB, develop mechanisms to identify at risk workers to target education and enforcement.
 - Using data to identify at risk workers, the OHS branch and WCB focused on three main sectors to target education and enforcement efforts: healthcare, transportation and construction.
 - The Employment Standards branch also delivered 20 information sessions to newcomer agencies in the fiscal year which target vulnerable or at risk populations.
 - The Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course (YWRCC) also targets education for at risk or vulnerable workers. The course provides information for young workers, typically before their first job, on general employment standards matters and highlights safety. This course is a requirement for workers aged 14-15 before they can be employed.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Respond efficiently and effectively to complaints and emerging issues

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Continue to respond when notified of high-risk situations.
 - The OHS branch conducted 148 worksite visits in response to prescribed notifications of high-risk situations, a decrease of 0.67 per cent from 149 in 2023-24.
 - High-risk situations include fatality or serious injury notifications, high-risk asbestos notifications, work refusals and public health occupational disease notifications.
- Continue to conduct unannounced, officer-initiated worksite visits.
 - Targeted intervention activities are complemented by officer-initiated and reactive worksite visits. In 2024-25, the branch conducted 1,325 officer-initiated worksite visits, an increase of 2.7 per cent from 2023-24.
- Continue to conduct reactive worksite visits arising from serious incidents, complaints and notifications.

- In 2024-25, the branch conducted 1,542 reactive worksite visits, an increase of 3.9 per cent from 2023-24.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Continue the WorkSafe Saskatchewan partnership with a focus on eliminating occupational injury and disease.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Continue to use WCB and ministry data to refine and improve analytics to drive targeted intervention.
 - The ministry is creating data analytics tools to guide the process of ongoing enforcement and monitoring of high injury employers, as well as to provide high-quality information on how to identify potential employers that could be added to the priority employer or directed/targeted inspection program to address industry specific concerns.
- Implement asbestos work training standards to prevent exposure-based disease.
 - Under the WorkSafe Saskatchewan partnership, a training standard for asbestos was developed that outlines the minimum training requirements for workers. This standard will ensure that workers who may be exposed to asbestos on the worksite receive high-quality and consistent safety and health training which will help reduce the number of asbestos-related incidents, illnesses and fatalities.
 - In 2024-25 10 sessions were held with 54 participants on the Occupational Health and Safety for Asbestos Workers Training Standard.
 - Having a training standard in place is necessary to ensure safety as the OHS branch received 476 high asbestos notifications and completed 186 asbestos-related worksite visits in 2024-25. As a result, the OHS branch issued 48 notices of contravention for noncompliance with asbestos related regulations.
- Engage with federal counterparts to coordinate inspection and educational activities with federally regulated employers in Saskatchewan.
 - The joint federal inspections focused on the transportation sector which is one of the key areas of the *Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy 2023-2028*. Federal inspectors and provincial officers collaboratively conducted 18 inspections, during which provincial officers gained a comprehensive understanding of the federal occupational health and safety processes within the transportation industry.
 - While the focus was the transportation sector, provincial officers led half of the joint inspections covering provincially regulated sectors including oil and gas, manufacturing, warehousing and construction to provide their federal counterparts with a better understanding of those sectors and processes.

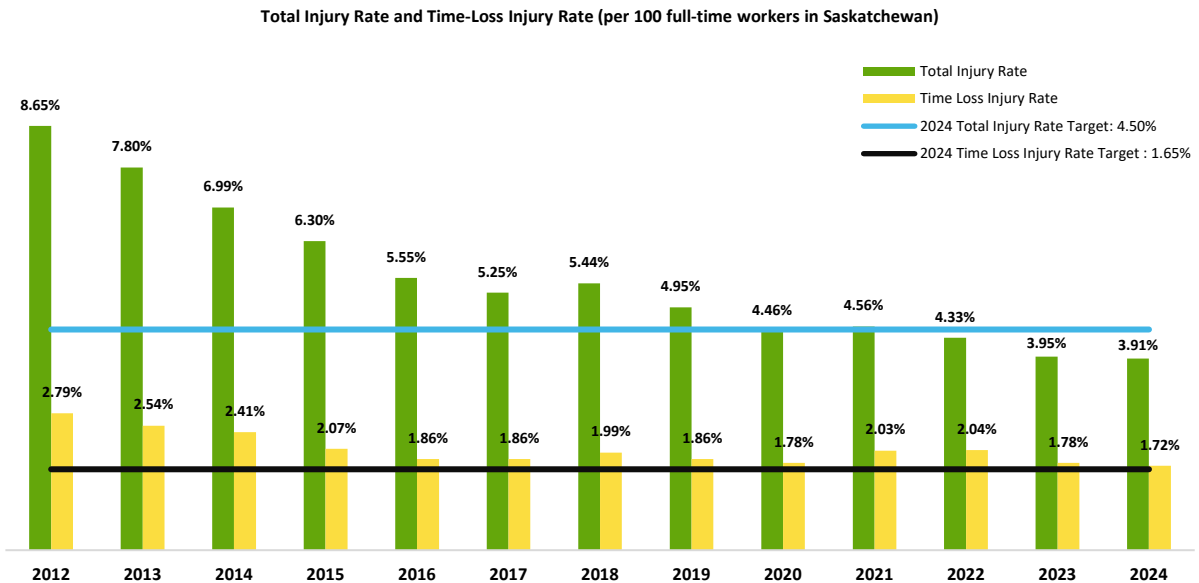
Performance Measure Results:

Time loss injury rate (calendar year)

- The target for 2024-25 is to reduce the provincial time loss injury rate to 1.65 per cent by December 31, 2024.
- In 2024, the provincial time loss injury rate was 1.72 per cent, which was higher than the target.

Total injury rate (calendar year)

- The target for 2024-25 is to reduce the total provincial injury rate to 4.50 per cent by December 31, 2024.
- In 2024, the total injury rate was 3.91 per cent, which was lower than the target.



Source: Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board.

This graph shows the total injury rate as well as the time-loss injury rate for Saskatchewan. Since 2012, the total injury rate has decreased by 55 per cent and the time-loss injury rate has been reduced by 38 per cent. The ministry is on track to meet its goal of reducing the provincial time-loss injury rate by 25 per cent by 2030.

Progress on Goal 2: Foster a culture of compliance with employment laws to ensure better outcomes in workplaces

The ministry uses a consistent approach with stakeholders regarding employment legislation. This creates a fair and level playing field that will help create opportunities for business investment and economic growth. Helping businesses and workers understand employment laws and their rights and responsibilities ensures that everyone has the same opportunity for success across sectors. For Saskatchewan, this is an important part of creating a strong and diverse economy, reaching the Growth Plan goal of 100,000 new jobs and providing more opportunities for all citizens.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Expand outreach and education activities to increase understanding of legislative requirements.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Use a variety of delivery methods and introduce new webinar topics and connections to expand outreach and education activities.
 - The Employment Standards branch gave 48 presentations on employment standards topics for employers, employees and representative groups. There were over 3,899 attendees of employment standards educational sessions, an increase of about 300 from 2023-24.
 - A total of 8,530 YWRCC certificates were issued, which is 999 or 10.5 per cent fewer than 2023-24. The YWRCC was updated to reflect changes to the minimum wage and harassment and violence prevention legislation.
 - The employment standards webpage content on saskatchewan.ca had over 850,000 views, which demonstrates that individuals are using the website as an information source for many topics. The reduction in views from about one million last year was mostly due to the transfer of the Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Protection Unit to the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training.
 - Labour Relations and Mediation facilitated education courses with employers and unions including conflict resolution, communication and negotiation. In 2024-25, 48 training sessions were held with stakeholders.
 - Labour Relations and Mediation and Employment Standards have started a joint project aimed toward Indigenous organizations and communities that focuses on education around conflict resolution in the workplace as well as employment standards requirements. Four sessions were held in 2024-25.
- Informally collect feedback to identify areas of future outreach and education initiatives.
 - The ministry continued to survey internal and external clients and colleagues and examined inquiries and complaint trends to identify employer and employee learning needs.
 - Employment Standards conducted 10 pre-learning needs assessments with clients who requested presentations and adapted training content to address specific issues and information requests.

- Develop and update targeted information that is relevant and accessible to clients.
 - In 2024-25, the ministry prepared webinar content on youth, seasonal employment protections and discriminatory action protections, as well as record keeping and pay statement requirements.
 - The ministry also continued to explore and deliver training to new employer and employee audiences, particularly vulnerable employees such as newcomers.
 - The publication *Understanding Saskatchewan's Employment Standards* continues to be updated to reflect legislation and regulation changes. This publication was downloaded 19,000 times in 2024-25, compared to over 23,000 times in 2023-24.
 - The *Young Worker Readiness Course Guide and Workbook* continued to be updated and was downloaded 2,197 times in 2024-25, compared to 2,183 times in 2023-24.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Ensure fair, impartial treatment of clients through consistent application of legislation.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Develop, update and implement standardized investigation procedures.
 - Employment Standards continued comprehensive onboarding and orientation for new officers, which includes mentorship by senior officers.
 - The branch cross-trained officers from different units to promote consistency and develop resiliency.
 - The branch completed 268 quarterly file audits to ensure a standard approach to case management.
 - Employment Standards conducted weekly officer file discussions to ensure consistent approaches to responding to inquiries and resolving claims.
- Develop and maintain reference materials respecting the legislation and case law.
 - Employment Standards developed standard reference material regarding auditing daily overtime and investigating disability accommodation.
 - The branch began a series of internal officer training webinars on the interpretation and application of the legislation. Twelve webinars were delivered in 2024-25.
- Use appropriate enforcement tools to increase compliance.
 - Employment Standards:
 - investigated and resolved a total of 2,267 formal complaints, an increase of 23 per cent from 2023-24;
 - investigated and resolved a total of 246 anonymous complaints, an increase of 10 per cent from 2023-24;
 - assessed for \$2.65 million and collected \$2.33 million of wages that were owing to employees for an overall collection rate of 88 per cent; and
 - issued employers 142 formal orders to pay wages with 25 orders appealed and 19 adjudication hearings completed.
- Conduct targeted reviews of high-risk and repeat non-compliant employers under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.
 - Employment Standards reviewed the compliance of 44 repeat, non-compliant employers, issued compliance monitoring letters to 36 employers and issued

final warning letters to 12 employers. The final warning letter is a precursor to prosecution if further violations are identified.

Performance Measure Results:

Employment standards compliance index

- The target for 2024-25 is to maintain a compliance index for employment standards of 85 per cent or greater.
- The ministry achieved an 82 per cent compliance index in 2024-25, compared to 85 per cent in 2023-24. The lower compliance index was due to fewer wages voluntarily collected, primarily due to employer insolvencies and a few high value claims.

Progress on Goal 3: Ensure legislation remains relevant in changing workplaces to promote growth

A competitive business environment requires employment laws that are fair and balanced, while fostering a growth-oriented economy. Legislation that governs workers and employers needs to reflect modern workplaces in our province and meet the needs of the labour force. This will aid the province in growing the economy, the workforce and make it an attractive place for both large and small businesses to invest, succeed and grow.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Foster continuous improvement in legislation, regulations and policies.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Be leaders in early adoption of new standards.
 - Bill 4, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2024* was introduced on December 4, 2024. This bill expands the occupational disease presumption to wildland firefighters and extends voluntary coverage to out-of-province workers whose usual place of residence is in Canada. These amendments make Saskatchewan a leader in protection and coverage for workers.
- Provide timely and informed legislative options to support government direction.
 - The ministry began developing a plan for stakeholder engagement and review of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*.
- Consider amendments to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and associated regulations.
 - The ministry completed a review of employment standards provisions of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (Part II). Bill 5, *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2024* was introduced on December 4, 2024.
 - The ministry initiated a review of *The Employment Standards Regulations, The Conditions of Employment Regulations* and *The Minimum Wage Regulations, 2014*.

Strategy: *The approach we took to achieve our goal*

Ensure stakeholder engagement in legislative, regulatory and program reviews early in the process.

Key Actions: *What we did to get there*

- Collaborate with jurisdictional partners and working groups to:
 - harmonize occupational health and safety regulations;
 - analyze and implement best practices; and
 - inform strategies.
 - The ministry continues to work cooperatively with counterparts across Canada to identify areas of mutual interest and concern.

- Collaborate with stakeholders and others to ensure that legislation is modern, efficiently and effectively implemented and does not result in any unintended consequences.
 - Engagement with the Saskatchewan Professional Firefighters and Paramedics Association, Saskatchewan Volunteer Firefighters Association and the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union resulted in an expansion of the occupational disease presumption to wildland firefighters in *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013*.
 - Amendments to the employment standards provisions of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* were informed by feedback from the public and a variety of stakeholders, including employer groups, organized labour and other interested parties. Letters requesting feedback were sent to 153 stakeholders and 89 submissions were received.

Performance Measure Results:

Continue to implement a legislative review plan for *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*

Complete the review of Part II of the Act.

- The review of Part II of the Act was completed in 2024-25.

Complete the review of *The Employment Standards Regulations, The Conditions of Employment Regulations, and The Minimum Wage Regulations, 2014*.

- The review of *The Employment Standards Regulations, The Conditions of Employment Regulations and The Minimum Wage Regulations, 2014* is underway.

Begin a review of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*.

- The ministry began developing a plan for stakeholder engagement and review of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*.

Implement *The Radiation Health and Safety Regulations, 2024*.

- *The Radiation Health and Safety Regulations, 2024* came into force on August 8, 2024.

2024-25 Improvement and Innovation Highlights

<p>1</p>	<p>Legislative Reviews - Employment Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Saskatchewan Employment Act</i> prescribes when various parts of the legislation must be reviewed to keep it relevant and meet the needs of employers and employees. • In 2024-25, the ministry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed the review of Part II of the Act. ○ Started the review of <i>The Employment Standards Regulations, The Conditions of Employment Regulations, and The Minimum Wage Regulations, 2014</i>. ○ Developed a plan for a review of <i>The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020</i>. ○ Implemented <i>The Radiation Health and Safety Regulations, 2024</i>. • The ministry continues to engage with stakeholders to determine which areas would benefit by being updated. • All employees and employers’ benefit from modern legislation. Relevant legislation and regulations help create a culture of safety that will help protect workers from injuries and fatalities. The legislation also helps clarify rights and responsibilities for both employees and employers, which protects everyone and creates an environment of compliance.
<p>2</p>	<p>Re-invigorate the Culture of Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous improvement and innovation can become stagnant if not fostered. Many small improvements can have a significant impact on the services available to citizens. • In 2024-25, the ministry created cross-branch connections to develop and implement an IT solution to improve data access resulting in efficiencies for the daily work of staff.

Financial Summary

Expense Summary

Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety Expense Actuals

	2023-24 Actuals (\$000s)	2024-25 Budget (\$000s)	2024-25 Actuals (\$000s)	2024-25 Variance (\$000s)	Notes
Central Management and Services	\$4,671	\$5,197	\$5,025	(\$172)	1
Occupational Health and Safety	9,643	9,675	10,632	957	2
Employment Standards	3,207	2,911	3,171	260	2
Labour Relations Board	1,036	1,000	1,061	61	
Labour Relations and Mediation	642	680	697	17	
Injured Worker Appeal Services	887	943	979	36	
Total Appropriation	\$20,086	\$20,406	\$21,565	\$1,159	
Capital Asset Acquisitions	0	0	0	0	
Amortization of Capital Assets	92	92	92	0	
Total Expense	\$20,178	\$20,498	\$21,657	\$1,159	

Notes:

Explanation of variances that exceed \$100,000 between Budget and Actual:

1. The variance was due to vacancy management, lower than anticipated cost of the Asbestos Registry rebuild, and lower expenditures in contractual services.
2. Higher expenditures were due to updated compensation for government employees that was negotiated with union and resulted in a mid-year in-scope collective bargaining agreement settlement, out-of-scope economic adjustments and classification plan renewal adjustments.

Revenue Summary

Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Revenue

	2024-25 Budget (\$000s)	2024-25 Actuals (\$000s)	2024-25 Variance (\$000s)	Notes
Proceeds from Other Funds	\$13,705	\$15,300	\$1,595	1
Receipts from Federal Government	350	289	(61)	
Privileges, Licenses and Permits	8	18	10	
Sales, Services and Service Fees	6	0	(6)	
Other Revenue	0	0	0	
Subtotal	\$14,069	\$15,607	\$1,538	
Total Revenue	\$14,069	\$15,607	\$1,538	

Notes:

Explanation of variances that exceed \$100,000 between Budget and Actual:

1. Higher than anticipated revenue from the WCB due to higher recoverable expenditures from OHS, IWAS.

Additional financial information can be found in the Government of Saskatchewan Public Accounts located at <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/categories/893>