

2024

COMMUNITY REPORT

Q3



A clear path for change through accountability

Accountability breeds change. That's the focus of a new business model at WCB Nova Scotia that's aimed at better protecting the workforce Nova Scotia so badly needs to be healthy, working, and on the job.

"The old adage is that you can't keep doing things the same way and expect to see different results," says WCB CEO Karen Adams. "We have more people working in the province than ever before and we have an obligation to make sure that they stay healthy and safe at work."

She says that for too long, WCB was actually the bottleneck. Now, WCB is on a clear path to change – to be the solution, not the problem.

The government review of the workers' compensation system earlier in 2024 identified a WCB that wasn't living up to its potential, and validated the WCB's new strategic plan, already in motion. Both shone a light on the problem: Too many workers spend too long away from work due to injury, and too many of them go on to long-term benefits – far more than in other provinces.

The claims process was too slow and return-to-work outcomes were among the worst in the country. "The review reiterated what we already knew: The workers and employers of this province need more from us," says Adams. "That's why we've acted."

That action includes:

- **Keeping prevention as job one**, continuing the decline in the province's injury rate.

- **Holding WCB itself more accountable**, through service level agreements and more visible, regular reporting on standards on everything from how quickly phone calls are returned to how quickly claim decisions are issued.
- **Holding employers accountable**, who may face fines if they don't cooperate in return to work, or find suitable work for people injured on the job.
- **Holding workers accountable**, who also have to do their part in the return-to-work process.
- **Holding service providers accountable**, curbing over-treatment of sprain and strain injuries and ensuring effective return-to-work support.

The path to improvement is simple, Adams says. Injuries are usually prevented, but when they happen, WCB does its job. And with better outcomes driven by increased accountability, WCB becomes more financially stable, and less expensive.

That will eventually allow the WCB to reduce employer rates, and government to improve worker benefits, in tandem: A balanced approach that realizes the benefits of a more efficient system.

As the province grows, so does its workforce. And WCB's work becomes even more important to keep Nova Scotians working. "We all want the same thing – we want Nova Scotians working," says Adams. "Accountability, for all of us, is how we will accomplish that."



**WORK SAFE.
FOR LIFE.**

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA

Progress in injury prevention

Injuries half what they were when WCB assumed prevention mandate.

In the early 2000s, when WCB first became responsible for prevention, the injury rate was over 3 per 100 covered workers.

The workforce has grown since then, significantly. But, injury has declined. As of Q3, the injury rate is under 1.4. That is less than half what it was in 2003.

A big part of that is progress in home care and long-term care.

Injury rates in these sectors have improved greatly in the past five years, meaning those caregivers who care for others are on the job, because we're preventing injury together with our partners.

CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

INJURY RATE: Nursing homes



INJURY RATE: Home care



Return to work challenges continue

Too many workers are off for too long, and too many go on to receive long-term benefits. That's the problem in Nova Scotia. We all have a role to play in solving that problem.

Here's what we are doing:

- We have rebuilt the claims process for the most common injuries.
- We are making decisions faster, and we have made case conferences mandatory.

- We've retrained our people in the fundamentals of claim management.
- We are meeting our new service level agreements.
- We're holding ourselves, service providers, and employers more accountable.



Employees like Nazeema Askar, Corporate Development, supported training for case workers, as part of our ongoing commitment to provide consistent and exceptional service.

Watch for more on Duty to Cooperate requirements, coming in 2025.



Front cover: WCB's VP Prevention and Employer Engagement, Tracey Newman, helped Halifax Harbour Bridges (HHB) celebrate an injury-free milestone: 2,257 days without injury. She is pictured here with Operations Supervisor, Stephen Ashton, at the MacKay Bridge toll booths. HHB has a robust safety program to keep their employees working safely on the job.

Q3 2024

Performance Snapshots

PREVENTION

MAY
BE
ACHIEVED

1.38

**Time loss injuries
per 100
covered workers**
(all industries)

- 2024 TARGET -

1.37

Nationally, Nova Scotia is a leader in workplace injury prevention. This quarter, the injury rate is holding steady, despite an increase in the size of the covered workforce. And, in our largest sector, Health and Social Services, where there has been growth in payroll, there has also been a reduction in injury. It's critical we maintain safety as a top priority in workplaces across the province.

Lower is better.

RETURN TO WORK

WILL
NOT BE
ACHIEVED

267

**Time loss days
paid per 100
covered workers**

- 2024 TARGET -

235

It is still taking too long for workers in Nova Scotia to return to work after injury, meaning our target goals will not be met. We are working hard to make improvements. In Q3, we retrained our case workers and reached out to service providers to align on diagnosis and treatment guidelines. Those are now consistent with other WCBs and private insurance best practices across Canada.

Lower is better.

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

MAY
BE
ACHIEVED

74%

**Message
response in
2 days**

- 2024 TARGET -

76%

Our exceptional service metrics continue to trend upward, reflecting our dedication to providing exceptional service to workers and employers. There are measurable improvements across all key service performance targets, including first contact within 2 days, entitlement decisions in 7 days and first payment within 15 days.

Higher is better.

16 Workplace fatalities

Tragically, in the first three quarters of 2024, 16 Nova Scotians died at work, or because of their work.

Outreach and Engagement: WCB in the Community

Protecting more workers from the impact of psychological injury

Members of WCB's Specialized Adjudication teams, who work closely with first responders and others experiencing traumatic psychological injuries, attended the annual Helping the Helpers conference in Antigonish to gain a better understanding of the challenges workers with this type of injury face. WCB is proud to sponsor this event, which marked its 10th year in 2023.



Left to right: Lynette Fenton, Director, Psychological Injury; Lesley Perkins, Amanda Kenny, Molly Hayes, Barbie Bussey, Teri McAleese, Tymika Kane, and Denise MacKenzie.

Protecting people in the fishing industry

WCB Nova Scotia sent a message to captains and owner-operators of lobster boats ahead of the season opening. We wished them and their crews a successful season and provided some important safety reminders, complete with a safety checklist. Fishing in Nova Scotia is safer than it has ever been, thanks to work led by WCB in partnership with government and industry safety leaders.



The fishing sector's injury rate has improved 20 per cent over the last six years.

Protecting the health care workforce

Protecting the health care workforce is so critical to our future. We are inspired to work with many partners in these sectors, because we all want the same thing – Nova Scotians working, and caring for other Nova Scotians. We've made progress together in recent years, but we're just getting started.



WCB's Ian MacDonald, Manager, Home Care and Acute Care, and Jo-Anne Poirier, President and CEO, VON Canada.

Q3 2024: Summary of Performance

WORKPLACE FATALITIES

	Q3 2023	TOTAL 2023	Q3 2024	YTD 2024
Health-related	1	2	2	5
Occupational disease	4	9	1	5
Acute fatalities	3	7	2	6
TOTAL	8	18	5	16

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

INJURY PREVENTION

	2023	Q3 2024	TARGET 2024	TARGET 2030
Time loss injuries per 100 covered workers*	1.40	1.38	1.37	1.16
Number of employers that receive the tools and resources to prevent psychological injury in the workplace	N/A	100%	100%	100%

RETURN TO WORK

	2023	Q3 2024	TARGET 2024	TARGET 2030
Time loss days per 100 covered workers*	259	267	235	167
Return to work – within 90 days	68%	66%	70%	80%
Return to work final – Full	91.7%	92.9%	92.7%	94.5%
Return to work final – Partial	2.5%	2.2%	3.5%	3.5%

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

	2023	Q3 2024	TARGET 2024	TARGET 2030
First contact in 2 days	73%	75%	76%	80%
Entitlement decisions in 7 days	40%	63%	60%	80%
First payment in 15 days	56%	64%	70%	80%
Message response in 2 days	66%	74%	76%	80%

*Rolling 12-month average of the previous 12 months.

Statement of Financial Position
As at September 30, 2024

	SEPTEMBER 30 2024 (Unaudited) (\$000s)	SEPTEMBER 30 2023 (Unaudited) (restated)* (\$000s)	DECEMBER 31 2023 (Audited) (\$000s)
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 29,060	\$ 30,798	\$ 30,602
Other receivables	17,113	19,238	10,187
Investments	2,598,061	2,267,742	2,418,598
Property and equipment	2,981	3,613	3,304
Intangible assets	21,324	24,550	24,141
	\$ 2,668,539	\$ 2,345,941	\$ 2,486,832
LIABILITIES AND UNFUNDED POSITION			
Other payables and accrued liabilities	\$ 36,959	\$ 36,825	\$ 38,409
Post employment benefits	24,684	20,632	23,658
Insurance contract liabilities	2,762,558	2,511,396	2,684,037
	2,824,201	2,568,853	2,746,104
Unfunded position	(155,662)	(222,912)	(259,272)
	\$ 2,668,539	\$ 2,345,941	\$ 2,486,832

WCB offers more protection to the workforce

In Q3, WCB supported two important amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act. We provided workers and employers with a new service as coverage for gradual onset psychological injury came into effect. Leading up to September 1, we prepared Nova Scotians for the change, offering webinars, in-person meetings, launching a comprehensive website for injury prevention and developing return-to-work tools and materials like the video pictured here.

We also updated our policy for funeral benefits so that the legislated increase from \$4,000 to \$15,000 could be paid to bereaved family members right away, without the requirement to provide receipts for funeral arrangements.

**Watch the Gradual Onset
Psychological Injury video:**



GRADUAL ONSET PSYCHOLOGICAL INJURY



Statement of Operations

For the nine months ended at September 30 (Unaudited)

	THIRD QUARTER 2024	THIRD QUARTER 2023 (restated)*	YTD SEPTEMBER 30 2024	YTD SEPTEMBER 30 2023 (restated)*
	(\$000s)	(\$000s)	(\$000s)	(\$000s)
Insurance service result				
Insurance service revenue				
Insurance revenue	\$ 106,095	\$ 97,519	\$ 327,370	\$ 300,190
Other Contribution - Province of NS	1,093	1,093	3,278	3,278
	107,188	98,612	330,648	303,468
Insurance service expenses				
Claims costs incurred	(73,450)	(68,681)	(212,261)	(190,095)
Assumptions change and actuarial experience adjustment	11,089	(18,773)	4,991	(34,403)
Administration expense	(14,872)	(12,395)	(42,534)	(36,938)
	(77,233)	(99,849)	(249,804)	(261,436)
	29,955	(1,237)	80,844	42,032
Insurance finance result				
Investment income (loss)	93,101	(44,387)	165,961	20,552
Insurance finance (expense) income	(84,521)	49,935	(119,215)	(28,836)
	8,580	5,548	46,746	(8,284)
Other revenue and expenses				
Self-insured revenue	2,386	2,075	7,028	6,164
Other administration expense	(4,696)	(3,914)	(13,432)	(11,664)
System support	(297)	(274)	(890)	(843)
Legislated obligations	(5,653)	(5,176)	(16,685)	(14,810)
	(8,260)	(7,289)	(23,979)	(21,153)
Excess of revenues over expenses (expenses over revenues) applied to increase (decrease) the funded position	\$ 30,275	\$ (2,978)	\$ 103,611	\$ 12,595

Statement of Changes in the Unfunded Position

For the nine months ended at September 30 (Unaudited)


	THIRD QUARTER 2024	THIRD QUARTER 2023 (restated)*	YTD SEPTEMBER 30 2024	YTD SEPTEMBER 30 2023 (restated)*
	(\$000s)	(\$000s)	(\$000s)	(\$000s)
UNFUNDED POSITION				
Unfunded position excluding accumulated other comprehensive income				
Balance, beginning of period	\$ (185,937)	\$ (219,934)	\$ (265,243)	\$ (243,839)
Excess of revenues over expenses (expenses over revenues) applied to increase (decrease) the funded position	30,275	(2,978)	103,611	12,595
	(155,662)	(222,912)	(161,632)	(231,244)
Accumulated other comprehensive income				
Balance, beginning of Year			5,970	8,332
			5,970	8,332
UNFUNDED POSITION, END OF PERIOD	\$ (155,662)	\$ (222,912)	\$ (155,662)	\$ (222,912)

Statement of Cash Flows

For the nine months ended at September 30 (Unaudited)

	YTD SEPTEMBER 30 2024 (\$000s)	YTD SEPTEMBER 30 2023 (\$000s)
Operating Activities		
Cash received from:		
Employers, for insurance premiums and self-insured administration fees	\$ 339,155	\$ 308,449
Other contribution - Province of NS	3,278	3,278
Net investment income	28,993	569
	371,426	312,296
Cash paid to:		
Claimants or third parties on their behalf	(243,239)	(240,823)
Suppliers, for administrative and other goods and services	(87,072)	(61,735)
	(330,311)	(302,558)
Net cash provided by operating activities	41,115	9,738
Investing Activities		
Increase in investments	(42,308)	(7,912)
Cash paid for:		
Purchase of equipment and intangible assets	(349)	(2,358)
Net cash used in investing activities	(42,657)	(10,270)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(1,542)	(532)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	30,602	31,330
Cash and cash equivalents, end of period	\$ 29,060	\$ 30,798

*Q3 and YTD 2023 have been restated for the new reporting standard, IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts.



We all want the same thing: We want Nova Scotians working.

Karen Adams, CEO

WORK SAFE. FOR LIFE.
WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA

See our path to 2030.
wcb.ns.ca/protectmore

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