

Psychological Injury Claims (Mental Disorder Claims)

2019 to 2023

Background

The *Workers Compensation Act (Act)* was amended July 1, 2012, and under section 135, WorkSafeBC may accept a mental disorder that is work-related and is a reaction to:

- one or more traumatic work-related events; or
- a significant work-related stressor, or a cumulative series of significant work-related stressors.

Section 135 (2) of the *Act* provides presumptive coverage for mental disorders for correctional officers, emergency medical assistants (e.g., paramedics), firefighters, police officers, sheriffs, emergency response dispatchers, health care assistants, and nurses. For workers in these eligible occupations who have been exposed to traumatic event(s) in their work and have been diagnosed with a mental disorder that may arise from a traumatic event, the mental disorder is presumed to be caused by employment.

To be allowed for compensation under section 135 of the *Act*, a mental disorder claim requires a diagnosis by a psychologist or psychiatrist.

WorkSafeBC may also accept a psychological condition on claims where the psychological injury develops as a consequence of a physical injury.

Report introduction

This report includes information on two sets of claims with psychological injuries: psychological injury only (mental disorder) claims; and claims with both a physical injury and a psychological injury.

Psychological injury only claims

In 2023, 6,791 new psychological injury only claims were reported to WorkSafeBC. Psychological injury only claims reported are claims where a psychological injury is the only injury on the claim, and are considered reported when the first psychological injury is added on the claim.

In 2023, 2,208 psychological injury only claims were allowed. These are claims where the psychological injury is the only accepted injury on the claim, and are considered allowed when the first psychological injury is accepted on the claim.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Psychological injury only claims reported	4,506	4,438	5,455	5,902	6,791
Psychological injury only claims allowed	1,718	1,626	1,742	1,982	2,208

Psychological injury only claims – allow rate

In 2023, the allow rate on psychological injury only mental disorder claims was 49%. The allow rate is the number of claims with an allow decision, as a percentage of the claims where an allow/disallow decision was made. For a psychological injury to be allowed, the injury must arise out of and in the course of the worker’s employment and meet the criteria under section 135 of the *Act*. Section 135 of the *Act* requires that the mental disorder is the result of either a traumatic event or a significant stressor, is diagnosed by a psychiatrist or psychologist as a condition under the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), and is not caused by a decision of the worker’s employer relating to the worker’s employment. If any of the above criteria are not met, the claim is disallowed.

Psychological injury only claims – Reported, Eligibility Decisions and Allow rate

	Psychological injury only Claims Reported in year	Eligibility Decisions in year on psychological injury only claims					
		Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate	No Adjudication Required	Rejected	Suspended
2019	4,506	1,718	1,361	56%	125	33	1,311
2020	4,438	1,626	1,388	54%	235	23	1,256
2021	5,455	1,742	1,466	54%	263	32	1,554
2022	5,902	1,982	1,555	56%	499	27	1,606
2023	6,791	2,208	2,254	49%	349	25	2,249

For the purposes of the chart above:

- Claims are considered reported when the first psychological injury is added on the claim.

- Allowed claims are reported in the year a first psychological injury is accepted.
- Disallowed, suspended, rejected and no adjudication required claims are reported in the year of the latest eligibility decision. Some claims have more than one eligibility decision (for example, a claim that is first disallowed or suspended might be subsequently allowed), but for the purposes of this chart only the latest eligibility decision is shown in the year of that decision.
- The allow rate is the number of claims with an allow decision, as a percentage of the claims where an allow/disallow decision was made.
- Not all claims receive an eligibility decision in the same year as the psychological injury is first reported. The eligibility decisions shown in this chart are the decisions made on psychological injury only claims in the year, regardless of the year the psychological injury was first reported.
- Not all claims registered receive an allow or disallow decision. Some claims are suspended and do not proceed through the decision-making process. This happens after the claims are registered and is often a choice workers make not to proceed with the requirements of the claims inquiry process, including obtaining a diagnosis from a psychologist or psychiatrist. Suspended claims may proceed at a future point and receive an allow or disallow decision. A smaller number of claims are classified as no adjudication required, or rejected. These claims may have been filed in error or when the worker was employed by an employer not covered under the *Act* in B.C.

Psychological injury only claims – presumption

In May 2018, the *Workers Compensation Act* was amended to introduce a presumption for mental disorders. For workers in eligible occupations, who have been exposed to traumatic event(s) in their work and have been diagnosed with a mental disorder that may arise from a traumatic event, the mental disorder is presumed to be caused by employment. Eligible occupations were defined under the *Act* as correctional officers, emergency medical assistants (e.g., paramedics), firefighters (assigned primarily to fire suppression duties), police officers and sheriffs.

In April 2019, the mental disorder presumption was amended to include emergency response dispatchers, health care assistants, and nurses. In May 2019, the definition of “firefighter” in the *Act* was amended and the presumption now covers wildland firefighters, fire investigators and firefighters working for First Nations or other Indigenous organizations.

Psychological injury only claims are adjudicated under section 135 of the *Act*. For workers in an eligible occupation, with a mental disorder caused by a traumatic event, the claim is first considered under the presumptive clause in section 135(2).

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Psychological injury only claims allowed under the presumption	504	578	643	743	624

This data is captured manually in business process and is provided for informational and trending purposes only.

Claims with both a physical injury and a psychological injury

In 2023, 965 psychological injuries were first accepted on claims with a physical injury.

Claims with a physical and psychological injury are largely claims where a psychological injury develops as a consequence of a physical injury, but also includes claims where there are concurrent psychological and physical injuries arising out of the same incident.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical with psychological injury first accepted	928	969	905	978	965

Report methodology & data notes

Claims with psychological injuries are reported in two categories:

- Psychological injury only (mental disorder) claims are adjudicated under section 135 of the Workers Compensation Act.
- Claims with both a physical and psychological injury, reported in the year a first psychological injury is accepted on a claim with a physical injury.

A psychological injury is defined by having an ICD-9 injury code in the psychological injury range from 290 to 319, with the exception of ICD-9 307.9 which is used for occupational disease.

The occupation information presented in this report is recorded on the claim file by claims staff based on the information available at the time. This occupation data is not collected by our statistical coding process, and is presented only for informational purposes.

For the purposes of this report occupations are grouped as follows:

- Nurse includes registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses and licensed practical nurses
- Teacher and assistant includes kindergarten, elementary and secondary school teachers, and elementary and secondary school teacher assistants
- Firefighter includes Firefighters, and Fire chiefs and senior firefighting officers

Data presented on claims adjudicated under the presumption is captured manually in business process and is provided for informational and trending purposes only. The application of the presumption is captured manually in responses to the eligibility decision assist tool in our claims management system (CMS). The ultimate evidence that a claim was adjudicated under the presumption is documented in a decision letter, but this evidence is not in "fielded data" or otherwise machine readable for the purposes of reporting.

The allow rate is the number of claims with an allow decision, as a percentage of the claims where an allow/disallow decision was made.

A. Data Tables – by industry

Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported and Allowed

Five-Year Summary, listing industry subsector and classification units with more than 25 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	Psychological injury only claims reported					Psychological injury only claims first allowed in year				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total - All Sectors	4,506	4,438	5,455	5,902	6,791	1,718	1,626	1,742	1,982	2,208
Health Care and Social Services	1,659	1,760	2,321	2,498	2,977	730	785	876	948	1,094
Acute Care	520	532	762	877	1024	208	219	244	300	323
Pre-hospital Emergency Health Care	279	322	427	357	369	199	233	260	242	217
Residential Social Service Facility	150	177	236	294	391	81	103	105	121	171
Community Health Support Services	203	229	281	301	354	79	72	87	83	132
Counselling or Social Services	173	145	187	213	270	64	60	69	77	112
Long-Term Care	225	239	284	314	359	64	64	68	71	91
Public Administration	318	466	577	731	576	180	167	180	239	222
Local Government and Related Operations	227	231	308	285	337	129	122	128	164	161
Law Enforcement	65	208	236	412	202	36	37	41	64	55
Transportation and Related Services	337	342	373	378	454	148	129	98	155	156
Commercial Bus, Shuttle Operations, or Public Transit	198	195	225	239	294	104	89	71	109	118
Education	361	317	414	419	525	107	99	96	128	153
Public School District	283	266	322	313	406	77	84	84	110	127
Federal Government	216	169	213	207	234	118	92	103	125	125
Deposit Sector 11 (Provincial Government)	144	141	216	240	270	85	83	100	105	124
Tourism and Hospitality	268	151	185	237	314	58	40	37	57	60
Retail	240	229	249	262	282	63	56	51	43	55
Other Services	163	135	177	154	177	44	25	36	37	37
General Construction	135	109	121	111	170	30	22	45	26	31
Business Services	133	108	103	137	133	27	23	23	28	25
Other Subsectors, Not Listed Above	440	414	418	431	493	127	105	97	90	126
No Subsector/ CU Information	92	97	88	97	186	1	0	0	1	0

2023 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate
 Listing industry subsector and classification units with more than 25 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2023			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Sectors	6,791	2,208	2,254	49%
Health Care and Social Services	2,977	1,094	854	56%
Acute Care	1,024	323	333	49%
Pre-hospital Emergency Health Care	369	217	56	79%
Residential Social Service Facility	391	171	71	71%
Community Health Support Services	354	132	102	56%
Counselling or Social Services	270	112	71	61%
Long-Term Care	359	91	147	38%
Public Administration	576	222	144	61%
Local Government and Related Operations	337	161	110	59%
Law Enforcement	202	55	18	75%
Transportation and Related Services	454	156	184	46%
Commercial Bus, Shuttle Operations, or Public Transit	294	118	105	53%
Education	525	153	174	47%
Public School District	406	127	114	53%
Federal Government	234	125	66	65%
Deposit Sector 11 (Provincial Government)	270	124	69	64%
Tourism and Hospitality	314	60	134	31%
Retail	282	55	131	30%
Other Services	177	37	101	27%
General Construction	170	31	72	30%
Business Services	133	25	64	28%
Other Subsectors, Not Listed Above	493	126	253	33%
No Subsector/CU Information	186	0	8	0%

2022 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate
 Listing industry subsector and classification units with more than 25 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2022			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Sectors	5,902	1,982	1,555	56%
Health Care and Social Services	2,498	948	568	63%
Acute Care	877	300	213	58%
Pre-hospital Emergency Health Care	357	242	35	87%
Residential Social Service Facility	294	121	48	72%
Community Health Support Services	301	83	77	52%
Counselling or Social Services	213	77	44	64%
Long-Term Care	314	71	105	40%
Public Administration	731	239	90	73%
Local Government and Related Operations	285	164	66	71%
Law Enforcement	412	64	13	83%
Transportation and Related Services	378	155	116	57%
Commercial Bus, Shuttle Operations, or Public Transit	239	109	69	61%
Education	419	128	160	44%
Public School District	313	110	109	50%
Federal Government	207	125	51	71%
Deposit Sector 11 (Provincial Government)	240	105	61	63%
Tourism and Hospitality	237	57	68	46%
Retail	262	43	104	29%
Other Services	154	37	60	38%
General Construction	111	26	36	42%
Business Services	137	28	53	35%
Other Subsectors, Not Listed Above	431	90	180	33%
No Subsector/CU Information	97	1	8	11%

2021 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate
 Listing industry subsector and classification units with more than 25 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2021			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Sectors	5,455	1,742	1,466	54%
Health Care and Social Services	2,321	876	498	64%
Acute Care	762	244	183	57%
Pre-hospital Emergency Health Care	427	260	43	86%
Residential Social Service Facility	236	105	31	77%
Community Health Support Services	281	87	59	60%
Counselling or Social Services	187	69	46	60%
Long-Term Care	284	68	97	41%
Public Administration	577	180	123	59%
Local Government and Related Operations	308	128	81	61%
Law Enforcement	236	41	15	73%
Transportation and Related Services	373	98	123	44%
Commercial Bus, Shuttle Operations, or Public Transit	225	71	57	55%
Education	414	96	155	38%
Public School District	322	84	115	42%
Federal Government	213	103	48	68%
Deposit Sector 11 (Provincial Government)	216	100	44	69%
Tourism and Hospitality	185	37	72	34%
Retail	249	51	91	36%
Other Services	177	36	63	36%
General Construction	121	45	38	54%
Business Services	103	23	44	34%
Other Subsectors, Not Listed Above	418	97	177	35%
No Subsector/CU Information	88	0	6	0%

2020 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate
 Listing industry subsector and classification units with more than 25 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2020			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Sectors	4,438	1,626	1,388	54%
Health Care and Social Services	1,760	785	426	65%
Acute Care	532	219	138	61%
Pre-hospital Emergency Health Care	322	233	33	88%
Residential Social Service Facility	177	103	30	77%
Community Health Support Services	229	72	67	52%
Counselling or Social Services	145	60	39	61%
Long-Term Care	239	64	75	46%
Public Administration	466	167	96	63%
Local Government and Related Operations	231	122	72	63%
Law Enforcement	208	37	12	76%
Transportation and Related Services	342	129	136	49%
Commercial Bus, Shuttle Operations, or Public Transit	195	89	75	54%
Education	317	99	150	40%
Public School District	266	84	131	39%
Federal Government	169	92	40	70%
Deposit Sector 11 (Provincial Government)	141	83	40	67%
Tourism and Hospitality	151	40	75	35%
Retail	229	56	94	37%
Other Services	135	25	57	30%
General Construction	109	22	40	35%
Business Services	108	23	41	36%
Other Subsectors, Not Listed Above	414	105	187	36%
No Subsector/CU Information	97	0	6	0%

2019 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate
 Listing industry subsector and classification units with more than 25 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2019			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Sectors	4,506	1,718	1,361	56%
Health Care and Social Services	1,659	730	391	65%
Acute Care	520	208	139	60%
Pre-hospital Emergency Health Care	279	199	21	90%
Residential Social Service Facility	150	81	23	78%
Community Health Support Services	203	79	36	69%
Counselling or Social Services	173	64	56	53%
Long-Term Care	225	64	78	45%
Public Administration	318	180	82	69%
Local Government and Related Operations	227	129	67	66%
Law Enforcement	65	36	9	80%
Transportation and Related Services	337	148	123	55%
Commercial Bus, Shuttle Operations, or Public Transit	198	104	64	62%
Education	361	107	118	48%
Public School District	283	77	90	46%
Federal Government	216	118	60	66%
Deposit Sector 11 (Provincial Government)	144	85	36	70%
Tourism and Hospitality	268	58	109	35%
Retail	240	63	84	43%
Other Services	163	44	68	39%
General Construction	135	30	43	41%
Business Services	133	27	64	30%
Other Subsectors, Not Listed Above	440	127	174	42%
No Subsector/CU Information	92	1	9	10%

B. Data Tables - By occupation

Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported and Allowed

Five-Year Summary, listing occupations with more than 20 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	Psychological injury only claims reported					Psychological injury only claims first allowed in year				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total - All Occupations	4,506	4,438	5,455	5,902	6,791	1,718	1,626	1,742	1,982	2,208
Nurse	461	510	690	861	965	220	222	244	309	367
Social and community service workers	319	365	517	515	670	144	154	203	212	287
Paramedic	244	282	360	318	310	181	214	224	214	179
Correctional Officer	138	128	189	191	169	111	89	124	130	131
Teacher and assistant	235	204	287	256	328	71	75	74	96	107
Firefighter	75	84	118	119	162	67	67	64	90	103
Bus drivers, subway operators and other transit operators	169	158	193	192	236	91	80	65	86	100
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	169	182	200	236	301	65	75	67	76	93
Police	62	118	233	417	207	35	39	41	72	64
Dispatcher	52	74	110	82	90	35	41	71	56	53
Retail salespersons	97	86	92	86	102	20	19	15	17	28
Social workers	42	39	43	67	63	26	19	23	28	26
Managers in social, community and correctional services	26	29	41	36	65	15	25	22	27	24
Transport truck drivers	53	55	54	48	73	17	13	19	20	20

2023 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate

Listing occupations with more than 20 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2023			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Occupations	6,791	2,208	2,254	49%
Nurse	965	367	260	59%
Social and community service workers	670	287	125	70%
Paramedic	310	179	52	77%
Correctional Officer	169	131	27	83%
Teacher and assistant	328	107	79	58%
Firefighter	162	103	23	82%
Bus drivers, subway operators and other transit operators	236	100	89	53%
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	301	93	104	47%
Police	207	64	20	76%
Dispatcher	90	53	12	82%
Retail salespersons	102	28	36	44%
Social workers	63	26	21	55%
Managers in social, community and correctional services	65	24	12	67%
Transport truck drivers	73	20	24	45%

2022 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate

Listing occupations with more than 20 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2022			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Occupations	5,902	1,982	1,555	56%
Nurse	861	309	175	64%
Social and community service workers	515	212	100	68%
Paramedic	318	214	37	85%
Correctional Officer	191	130	24	84%
Teacher and assistant	256	96	93	51%
Firefighter	119	90	16	85%
Bus drivers, subway operators and other transit operators	192	86	60	59%
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	236	76	53	59%
Police	417	72	12	86%
Dispatcher	82	56	4	93%
Retail salespersons	86	17	32	35%
Social workers	67	28	9	76%
Managers in social, community and correctional services	36	27	5	84%
Transport truck drivers	48	20	14	59%

2021 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate

Listing occupations with more than 20 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2021			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Occupations	5,455	1,742	1,466	54%
Nurse	690	244	131	65%
Social and community service workers	517	203	91	69%
Paramedic	360	224	33	87%
Correctional Officer	189	124	26	83%
Teacher and assistant	287	74	100	43%
Firefighter	118	64	20	76%
Bus drivers, subway operators and other transit operators	193	65	47	58%
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	200	67	65	51%
Police	233	41	13	76%
Dispatcher	110	71	12	86%
Retail salespersons	92	15	35	30%
Social workers	43	23	8	74%
Managers in social, community and correctional services	41	22	4	85%
Transport truck drivers	54	19	16	54%

2020 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate

Listing occupations with more than 20 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2020			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Occupations	4,438	1,626	1,388	54%
Nurse	510	222	110	67%
Social and community service workers	365	154	82	65%
Paramedic	282	214	29	88%
Correctional Officer	128	89	18	83%
Teacher and assistant	204	75	90	45%
Firefighter	84	67	12	85%
Bus drivers, subway operators and other transit operators	158	80	56	59%
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	182	75	45	63%
Police	118	39	11	78%
Dispatcher	74	41	13	76%
Retail salespersons	86	19	30	39%
Social workers	39	19	8	70%
Managers in social, community and correctional services	29	25	7	78%
Transport truck drivers	55	13	19	41%

2019 Psychological Injury Only Claims Reported, Allowed, Disallowed, Allow Rate

Listing occupations with more than 20 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2023.

	2019			
	Psychological injury only claims reported	Allowed	Disallowed	Allow Rate
Total - All Occupations	4,506	1,718	1,361	56%
Nurse	461	220	98	69%
Social and community service workers	319	144	66	69%
Paramedic	244	181	16	92%
Correctional Officer	138	111	17	87%
Teacher and assistant	235	71	60	54%
Firefighter	75	67	5	93%
Bus drivers, subway operators and other transit operators	169	91	49	65%
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	169	65	36	64%
Police	62	35	5	88%
Dispatcher	52	35	8	81%
Retail salespersons	97	20	39	34%
Social workers	42	26	6	81%
Managers in social, community and correctional services	26	15	4	79%
Transport truck drivers	53	17	21	45%

C. Data Table – Physical with psychological injury claims

Physical with psychological injury claims

Five-Year Summary, listing industry subsectors and classification units with more than 20 psychological injuries first accepted in 2023 on a claim with both a psychological and physical injury.

	Psychological injury first accepted				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total - All Sectors	928	969	905	978	965
Health Care and Social Services	192	211	257	264	241
Acute Care	64	61	90	91	76
Residential Social Service Facility	42	38	41	51	38
Long-Term Care	31	41	47	38	37
Counselling or Social Services	14	15	15	27	33
Community Health Support Services	19	24	24	28	28
Transportation and Related Services	110	97	88	98	119
General Trucking	32	38	33	31	33
Commercial Bus, Shuttle Operations, or Public Transit	15	7	11	19	23
General Construction	108	115	88	90	93
Education	52	53	55	68	72
Other Services	68	65	64	50	67
Tourism and Hospitality	66	53	47	51	60
Retail	50	63	54	52	49
Public Administration	31	39	33	34	37
Metal and Non-Metallic Mineral Products	32	34	17	24	30
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	15	28	16	19	27
Deposit Sector 11 (Provincial Government)	18	15	25	23	21
Other Subsectors, not listed above	181	193	157	203	147
No Subsector/CU Information	5	3	4	2	2