



LEGISLATIVE RETURN

SUBMITTED BY: Jeanie Dendys, Minister responsible for Yukon Workers Health and Safety Board

1. On _____,

asked the following question during the Oral Question Period at page(s) _____ of *Hansard*

submitted the following written question – WQ No. _____

gave notice of the following motion for the production of papers – MPP No. _____

RE: _____

OR

2. This legislative return relates to a matter outstanding from discussion related to:

Appearance of the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board Chair and President/CEO before Committee of the Whole

on **November 15, 2018** at **page(s) 3627, 3630 and 3631** of *Hansard*.

The response is as follows:

Please see attached.

Date

19/03/07

Signature



Question 1

Hansard Excerpt (page 3627)

Ms. McLeod: That's sufficient for me, thanks. Can the witness tell us how much is spent on contracts and tell us a little bit about WCB's process for contracting?

Mr. Dieckmann: The actual amount spent on contracts I will have to get for you. I don't have that figure for you, but I can speak to how we do our contracting. We have a contracting policy that very closely mirrors the Government of Yukon contracting policy — the thresholds are the same as what you would find in the government. Off the top of my head, I am not sure what they are, but all of our sole-source are the same levels, and when we have to go to tender, they are at the same levels as well as what you would find in the Government of Yukon contracting policy.

Ms. McLeod: Can the witness tell us what percentage of contracts go to Yukon companies?

Mr. Dieckmann: Our service contracts for things like snow clearing or janitorial — those types of contracts — our contracts for the majority of our systems work are Yukon companies. We just did a repair on the roof of our building that went to a Yukon company. For some of the specialized services that we get — two of our systems in particular — we use Outside contractors because the vendor was from outside the territory, and they are the ones that provide us with the tech support in those areas. But I would say that at least 75 percent of our contracts are internal to the Yukon and that just specialized contracts go outside. Some of our legal work is external to the territory when we need specialized advice.

Response

- In 2017, the board awarded contracts totaling \$1,031,372.54.
- 71% of that amount, or \$733,324.59, went to Yukon-based companies.
- Total number of contracts awarded in 2017 was 96. Of those, 66 contracts went to Yukon based companies.



Question 2

Hansard Excerpt (page 3630)

Ms. McLeod: Can the witness confirm how many cases with respect to either medical care or return-to-work that they currently have open dealing with non-resident workers? Can the witness tell us whether there has been an increase in these numbers over the last five years?

Mr. Dieckmann: I will have to get back to you on that. I do not have those numbers.

Response

- There is difficulty tracking non-resident workers accurately.
- Mailing address are an inaccurate measurement of residency status.
- Yukon based workers may relocate after an injury or vice versa, outside workers may decide to remain in Yukon.
- Post office box address may not be linked to actual physical residence.
- Active claims may not be recent injuries and the claimant may have changed residence several time over the course of the claim.



Question 3

Hansard Excerpt (page 3631)

Ms. McLeod: What is the board's current budget for marketing campaigns? I'm curious about whether or not the full budget amount for the last fiscal year was spent.

Mr. Dieckmann: I do not have that information with me but I will get it. I will get it to you.

Response

- Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board has an annual marketing budget of \$40,000.
- The budget was fully utilized in 2017.



Question 4

Hansard Excerpt (page 3631)

Ms. Hanson: I would also like to join in thanking the witnesses for being here today, and I concur with the comments at the outset that the piece at the front of the annual report that sets out the background and history of the evolution of workers' compensation in the Yukon is very interesting and it is well-written and the graphics are, I thought, very helpful and very good. There are a number of questions that I have on matters that arise from the report and a couple related to the strategic plan. My colleague from Watson Lake has raised a question with respect to the WHMIS in terms of all workplaces using hazardous products in their workplace being required to comply with WHMIS. When we looked at the accepted claims by event or exposure, we notice that the exposure to harmful substances or environments has actually gone up. In this last calendar year — the reported year for the annual report — it went from 53 to 72. I would be interested in the witness's analysis of why that might be, what kinds of workplaces we are talking about and what kind of substances or environments are captured in that statistic with the increase noted.

Mr. Dieckmann: As far as the nature of the exposures that we are seeing there, I would have to do a deeper dive with an analysis on that. I don't have that information with me right now, so I will have to get back to you on that one.

Ms. Hanson: Does it concern you that there is that increase? I mean, that is a significant increase. We are not talking about huge numbers in total in terms of the overall number of claims but just the fact that, in the three years after the regulations came into effect, we are seeing an increase in hazardous products causing injuries sufficient enough that there is an accepted claim.

Mr. Dieckmann: Fluctuations of the size that we see here are not uncommon, given our small numbers. As you say, those are very small numbers that we are talking about. One of the things when we talk about harmful substances, I do know that harmful substances do include WHMIS-controlled products, but when we talk about environment, that also includes things like frostbite, exposure to cold and those kind of things that can happen as well. Sometimes, depending on the nature of the work that is going on, if we have a lot of outside work happening — construction, those kinds of things — we can see increases in that area because of the exposure to harmful environments as well. Like I said, I have to dive into it a little bit deeper to understand what we are seeing here.

Ms. Hanson: I appreciate the witness sending this information.

Response

- There are several types of claims that are coded in our systems as "exposure" injuries.
- Most of these types of claims come from health care workers. When a patient attends a hospital or nursing station and is later diagnosed with tuberculosis, whooping cough or some other infectious disease, YWCHSB will receive claims for exposure from all staff who had contact with that patient. This can lead to a dozen or more claims from a single exposure incident. With our small numbers, a single incident can produce what appears to be a significant spike in claims.



- The vast majority of these claims are very short term and are closed once the incubation period of the disease has passed. YWCHSB keeps these reports on file in case an exposed worker develops a related disease in the future.
- Another significant factor in the rise in the number of exposures can be linked to “stress” claims. There has been an increase in the number of claims filed by workers seeking assistance with “stress” separate from PTSD claims. These claims are recorded as “exposure” claims.
- Claims for chemical exposures tend to come from industrial settings and janitorial workers. These claims are not tracked by specific chemical or substances as this information is not generally provided on the worker’s report of injury. Case managers will investigate and discover exact chemicals later in the claim adjudication process.
- Environmental exposure claims tend to come from restaurant and food service industry workers. YWCHSB receives more claims for burns, usually suffered in a restaurant or other food preparation site, than for frostbite or exposure to cold claims.