

EMPLOYEE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES - ANNUAL UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That the October 13, 2023, Employee and Legal Services report ES01578, be received for information.

Requested Council Action	Information only		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Healthy City		
City Plan Values	n/a		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	n/a	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Conditions for service success
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the Corporation		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bylaw 16620 - City Administration Bylaw 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ES00531, Employee Psychological Health and Safety Programs and Practices, Executive Committee, October 26, 2022 ES00210, National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, Executive Committee, March 22, 2021 		

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the October 31/November 2, 2022, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That the City of Edmonton (the City) officially adopt the National Standard of Canada for psychological health and safety in the workplace, as detailed in Attachment 1 of the October 12, 2022, Employee Services report ES00531, as a benchmark for continual improvement and report back to Committee annually on its progress.

Executive Summary

- This report provides an annual update regarding the City of Edmonton's alignment with the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (the Standard).
- The City is meeting or exceeding the 13 factors of the Standard and has continued to expand its resources and supports over the past year, including in the areas of hybrid work, diversity and inclusion and trauma-informed best practices.
- The City continues to use the Standard as a benchmark to expand and improve the City's programs and practices to support the psychological health and safety of employees and remain compliant with *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requirements.

REPORT

Background

The City is dedicated to continuous improvement in workplace psychological health and safety. By adhering to national and international standards and other best practices, the City fosters an environment that prioritizes employee wellbeing and mental health. The City will remain vigilant in implementing guidelines, integrating feedback, and evolving strategies to ensure its workplace meets or exceeds benchmarks.

The City's approach to psychological health and safety began with a shared value system of caring for and supporting employees, and following critical incidents in the workplace. Examples of this early work included:

- the establishment of a Chaplain's office over 40 years ago as a resource and emergency support for employees and leaders;
- the development of a Peer Support Program in the late 1990s to further support employees impacted by a critical incident at work; and
- an internal Employee and Family Assistance Program, which eventually transitioned to an external provider in the early 2000s.

The integration and expansion of some of the City's first mental health programs increased awareness of, and emphasis on, the importance of cultivating workplace psychological health and safety. This is a journey of shared responsibility that requires:

- commitment and prioritization from all leaders,
- involvement and collaboration from all areas of the organization, and
- the ongoing evaluation of mental health and wellness programs and processes.

This shared commitment is aligned with the City's Cultural Commitment of "Safe" and is reinforced in the City Manager's Occupational Health and Safety Commitment Statement.

The City's implementation of the Standard allows for the continuous assessment and evaluation of its programs, policies and strategic planning with the Standard's 13 Psychosocial Factors. The Standard will evolve and is under review by a technical committee to consider revisions, including the addition of factors such as the remote workplace; diversity, equity and inclusion; and trauma. While the City

continues to implement the Standard, it also considers recent developments in other standards for psychological health and safety, including the ISO 45003 Guidelines For Managing Psychosocial Risks¹, and the World Health Organization's guidelines for mental health at work².

Current Status of the 13 Factors of Psychological Health and Safety at the City

The COVID-19 pandemic transformed the workplace culture, with a rapid shift to remote work and evolving employee physical and psychological health and safety concerns. These factors have brought additional considerations and issues related to workplace psychological health and safety. The City of Edmonton has expanded psychological health and safety resources and supports as a result of these shifts.

Attachment 1 provides a comprehensive list of how the 13 Psychological Factors are reflected in the City's evolving approach to psychological health and safety. There are several City programs that fit under more than one factor. For the purposes of this report, the program is listed under the factor with which it most closely aligns. The summary of each factor is as set out in the Standard.

Below is a summary of highlights and updates at the City of Edmonton since the October 2022 report to the Executive Committee.

Factor 1 - Organizational Culture

"An organizational culture that enhances psychological safety is characterized by trust, honesty, respect, civility, fairness, psychological and social support, recognition and reward."

- The 2022 Cultural Commitments Awards were held in November 2022 in a virtual format facilitating more than 1,000 employees to tune in live or watch at their convenience. In 2023, 335 nominations were submitted.
- The second annual Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Report was published in the second quarter of 2023.
- Between July and August 2023, an Employee Recognition Ecard Campaign was launched that allowed employees to encourage meaningful peer recognition.

Factor 2 - Psychological and Social Support

"Psychological and social support involves all supportive social interactions available at work, either with co-workers or supervisors. It also includes the workers' perceptions and awareness of organizational support."

- Support resources for employees:
 - TELUS Health Employee and Family Assistance Program continues to provide counseling services to employees and their families.
 - The Chaplaincy Program is offered 24/7 via an on-call service.
 - As of July 2023, 4,431 active employees and people leaders have attended The Working Mind training.
 - There are 19 Peer Support Teams, including a corporate-wide leadership Peer

¹ <https://www.iso.org/home.html>

² <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240053052>

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Support Team. The Mental Health Ambassador Program (MHAP) continues to be offered to Peer Support team members and other relevant work areas. Between October 2022 and August 2023, 20 MHAP training sessions were offered.

- Wellness resources for employees:
 - Employees participated in the virtual November 2022 Employee Wellness Week One World Festival. Operational areas were provided with physical information packages.
 - The Mental Health and Wellness Team continues to provide Workplace Wellness Consultation, programming, services and policies to support the well-being of employees.
 - In a four week Mindfulness Program Pilot, seven sessions were completed with 8-10 participants in each session.
 - Corporate Mindfulness Sessions are available to employees at all times, in addition to weekly reminders
 - 37 Live Active Happy Hours were offered between October 2022 and July 2023.
 - The Before Operational Stress (BOS) Program has been completed by 1,112 Fire Rescue Services employees. Community Standards and Neighborhoods began offering the program to enforcement staff in May 2023.
 - Edmonton Fire Rescue Services and Community Standards and Neighbourhoods offer a reintegration program.
 - Administration is continuing to develop a corporate Trauma Response Program.

Factor 3 - Clear Leadership and Expectations

“Clear leadership and expectations is present in an environment in which leadership is effective and provides sufficient support that helps workers know what they need to do, explains how their work contributes to the organization and discusses the nature and expected outcomes of impending changes.”

- The Leadership Competency Development Pathway tool was launched in May 2023 as a resource to support leaders and employees to develop their leadership competencies based on a model of learning through experience (70%), learning through others (20%), and formal learning (10%).
- The Enabling Conversations learning series continues to be part of the core leadership programming and between October 2022 and April 2023, participation in each of the three modules increased by approximately 33%.
- Four employee Town Halls were led by the Executive Leadership Team between March 2022 and June 2023.
- The Leader Learning Toolkit for People Leaders was launched in 2023. This is a bi-monthly newsletter that focuses on practical skills to support ongoing conversations between people leaders and their teams.
- Branch Manager “Coffee Connections” and Deputy City Manager mentoring continue to support Branch Managers.
- The Quick Reference Guide for People Leaders was launched in December 2022 as a guide to assist with their supervisory responsibilities. It provides an overview on essential topics

and key resources that help people leaders manage their teams in alignment with the City's vision, plan and direction.

Factor 4 - Civility and Respect

"Civility and respect is present in a work environment where workers are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients and the public."

- Guided by The Art of Inclusion, the City's Diversity and Inclusion Framework, tools and training are offered to support employees to develop the mindset, heartset and skillset for inclusion including:
 - training for using Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+), the equity tool used at the City;
 - an Anti-Racism Learning Guide;
 - an Inclusive Language Guide;
 - a Diversity and Inclusion Goals for Performance Planning and Growth document; and
 - an Anti-racism leader toolkit.
- Administration remains committed to Inclusive Hiring Practices and requires Hiring Managers to learn about the recruitment lifecycle, interview scoring, GBA+, implicit bias and employee onboarding. The Guide for Inclusive Hiring: A Toolkit for Hiring Managers is available and included as part of the Hiring Manager Certification program.
- A refreshed Connected City Program will address emerging concerns such as public harassment of employees via personal social media accounts.
- As of July 2023, 2,248 employees have taken the City's Indigenous Awareness Training this year. To expand on this training, the Community Recreation and Culture Branch created a frontline workshop on the Indigenous Framework Toolkit and trained 1,274 employees during summer 2023.

Factor 5 - Psychological Demands

"Psychological demands of any given job are documented and assessed in conjunction with the physical demands of the job."

- A new Job Demands Analysis was created for disability management accommodation needs.
- The introduction of the Opioid Hazard Assessment and Naloxone Implementation Guidance for Leaders outlines the process for managing opioid-related hazards and clarifies expectations for the use of naloxone as a workplace control.
- Work is underway to pilot an enhancement to the Task Based Hazard Assessment of the hazard assessment methodology using position and task breakdown structure. This will also include further integration of psychological health and safety hazards and controls.

Factor 6 - Growth and Development

“Growth and development is present in a work environment where workers receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional and job skills.”

- In 2022, The Learning Centre managed 22,106 enrollments for 105 different classes. Notable courses in 2022/2023 include Anti-Racism Allyship, Anti-Racism Leadership and Everyday Equity: GBA+ on the Front Line.
- In the fourth quarter of 2023, Administration plans to launch The Learning Strategy to support and enhance employee learning, development and growth. To date, a number of learning supports advance the fore core elements of the The Learning Strategy:
 - Engaged and supportive leader;
 - Embedded knowledge sharing and learning;
 - A focus on continuous improvement; and
 - Enabling services, tools, and learning delivery.
- Work on the Enterprise Commons Learning Management System and learning and growth plans continues.

Factor 7 - Recognition and Reward

“Recognition and reward is present in a work environment where there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of workers’ efforts in a fair and timely manner.”

- Since 2019, 15,393 Everyday Appreciation Ecards were sent to express gratitude and appreciation.
 - Two new Ecards were launched during 2023 to recognize Inclusion Experience Week and to celebrate diversity and inclusion and accessibility champions.
- 335 nominations were received for the November 23, 2023 Cultural Commitments Awards.
- In response to employee feedback, a Request for Proposals for the Long Service Award gift providers utilized the Indigenous Procurement Framework to source gifts created by local Indigenous artists.
- A new localized approach to Celebrating You Employee Appreciation events launched with a toolkit to support planning.
- The Civic Retirement Program was updated to include a quarterly mailout that includes personalized letters from the City Manager and Mayor, as well as a certificate of service.

Factor 8 - Involvement and Influence

“Involvement and influence is present in a work environment where workers are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made.”

- IdeaLab collected employee ideas for cost savings, revenue generation, and organizational efficiencies.
- The City Manager Employee Engagement Team connects the City Manager with employees directly to understand their Employee Experience. The year 2023 saw the team’s first recruitment of new members following some members completing their required two-year term.

Factor 9 - Workload Management

“Workload management is present in a work environment where assigned tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available.”

- 52 Workplace Restoration files were completed between January 2022 and August 1, 2023. Many of these files addressed communication, trust and accountability within a team or work area. To provide enhanced service, the Workplace Restoration team completed Restorative Circle Training
- In response to the March 2023 Employee Engagement Check-in survey, people leaders were encouraged to facilitate a Keep-Start-Stop conversation with teams who raised workload concerns and empower their team members to be part of the solution.

Factor 10 - Engagement

“Engagement is present in a work environment where workers enjoy and feel connected to their work and where they feel motivated to do their job well.”

- The Employee Engagement Check-in survey is offered twice per year to allow business areas time to plan and execute meaningful improvements. In March 2023, 6,095 City employees participated in the Employee Check-in Survey. The overall employee engagement score was 67, which is slightly higher than the score of 66 in the Biennial Experience Survey in September 2022.
- In 2022 and 2023, employee survey results were disaggregated by diversity factors (race, gender, etc.), while maintaining anonymity thresholds. The data was shared with Diversity and Inclusion Committees to support action planning.
- Two new Employee Resource Networks were launched in 2023:
 - Able@theCity elevates the abilities of employees with disabilities through education, advocacy and empowerment to identify barriers, bridge gaps and co-create an inclusive organization with opportunities to excel.
 - ArmedForces@theCity fosters a work environment that supports and values employees who are current, former or supporting family members of armed forces personnel.

Factor 11 - Balance

“Balance is present in a work environment where there is acceptance of the need for a sense of harmony between the demands of personal life, family and work.”

- Letters of Understanding were signed with IBEW, CUPE, CSU 52 and ATU extending Hybrid Work Arrangements until April 30, 2024.
- Balance was identified as an area of opportunity in the March 2023 Employee Engagement Check-in survey. As a response, people leaders encouraged employees to take their vacation time and earned days off and led by example. Leaders also reiterated that employees are not obligated to respond to emails outside of working hours.

Factor 12 - Psychological Protection

“Psychological protection is present in a work environment where workers’ psychological safety is ensured. Workplace psychological safety is demonstrated when workers feel able to put themselves on the line, ask questions, seek feedback, report mistakes and problems or propose a new idea without fearing negative consequences.”

- From January 2019 to June 8, 2023 the Safe Disclosure Office received 1,078 requests for service and has ensured that these concerns are being addressed appropriately.
- As of July 4, 2023, 47.5% of people leaders completed the Domestic Violence and Our Workplace training. This is now mandatory training for all people leaders.
- A pilot Psychological Health and Safety Audit will be undertaken to assess the work that has been completed as part of the City’s alignment to the Standard.
- A dedicated Workplace Investigations Team was established in Labour Relations to enhance efficiencies and effectiveness, and mitigate potential bias within the investigative process.

Factor 13 - Protection of Physical Safety

“Protection of physical safety is present when a worker’s psychological, as well as physical safety, is protected from hazards and risks related to the worker’s physical environment.”

- An inaugural Certificate of Recognition (COR) Audit Performance Process (CAPP) Leadership Review took place in spring 2023. A second event is planned for fall 2023.
- The OHS Incident Investigation Project confirms the new investigation standard includes identification of psychological-related causes and corrective actions.
- A new qualitative Hearing Protection Fit Testing requirement was introduced in March 2023.
- First Aid Kits were replaced to comply with CSA Standard Z1220-17.
- A new Asbestos Awareness eLearning was launched as an introductory level course.

Psychological Health and Safety Management System - Administrative Data

A Psychological Health and Safety Management System (PHSMS) supports organizations through five main elements as described in the Standard:

- Commitment, leadership and participation;
- Planning;
- Implementation;
- Evaluation and corrective actions;
- Management review.

The Standard refers to the collection of a number of possible aggregated data sources to establish a baseline for a PHSMS. As a part of monitoring the impact of health and safety programs, the City collects data and compares trends to other public sector employers as applicable. Additional information is provided in Attachment 2.

Continuous Improvement and Exceeding the Standard

Meeting and exceeding the Standard at the City is part of the overall Occupational Health and Safety Program and control measures help address psychological hazards in the workplace. The City leverages a Plan-Do-Check-Act approach to encourage continuous improvement, measurement and auditing to support ongoing and positive workplace mental health.

In April 2022, the City received a Certificate of Recognition (COR) following external auditor confirmation of a strong healthy and safety management system.

The Standard describes the need to create an Internal Audit Process to ensure compliance with its mandatory elements. The City continues to explore additional evaluation, measurement and auditing approaches as a deliberate effort to ensure advancement and improvement of psychological health and safety. The City will be piloting a psychological health and safety audit with Edmonton Transit Service in fall 2023. The audit will consist of a virtual document review and virtual interviews. Findings and recommendations will be reviewed to be applied to the City as a whole.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

As part of the City's ongoing alignment with the Standard, Administration regularly scans and seeks input from other organizations, municipalities, and agencies in regard to psychological health and safety best practices in the workplace.

The City continues to meet with the Coalition of Edmonton Civic Unions to provide quarterly updates regarding psychological health and safety in the workplace. Additionally, Administration maintains yearly engagement with the Greater Edmonton Alliance (GEA) regarding the City of Edmonton's workplace psychological health programs.

GBA+

GBA+ will be applied as current policies to support employee psychological health and safety are reviewed and in the creation of new policies, procedures, standards and practices.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Detailed Summary of the Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Factors at the City of Edmonton
2. City of Edmonton Aggregated Administrative Data