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COVID-19 adds more than 5,000 Minnesota’s workers’ comp claims so far in 2020

ST. PAUL, MINN. (October 26, 2020) – Claims related to COVID-19 boosted Minnesota workers’ compensation filings by more than 5,000 between March and September 2020, even as most recent workplace fatality numbers fell according the state’s annual workplace safety report.

Of a total 26,082 workers’ compensation claims for the nine-month period in 2020, 5,387 were tied to COVID-19. For the period March-June 2020 – the latest for which detailed sector data is available – employees in the Health Care and Social Assistance category led the number of new COVID-19 claims with 1,914, followed by Manufacturing with 955. In 2019, there were 24,074 total claims filed from January through September.

“This uptick in the number of workers compensation claims underscores the impact of COVID-19 in our daily lives and in the workplace, and we can expect to see more ahead,” said Minnesota Safety Council President Paul Aasen. “This means we must all work together to address the claims, prevent new exposures and make infectious disease control part of day-to-day safety.”

Highlights of the 2020 dashboard include:

- In 2018, one Minnesotan died on the job every five days.
- Minnesota’s 2018 fatal injury rate of 2.7 per 100,000 workers is down from 3.5 in 2017 and is lower than the national average of 3.5.
- Every day in 2018, 196 Minnesotans sustained a workplace injury or illness, 96 of which were severe enough that work time was lost.
- Agriculture remains one of the state’s most dangerous sectors. Between 2014-2018, fatal work injuries involved those employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting were roughly twice the second leading category - construction.
- Falls remain a leading cause of injuries. Thirteen people a day are injured by falls at work and Minnesota also has the fourth highest fatality rate in the nation for falls at home.
- Driving remains a serious risk. The top three causes of fatal workplace injuries are driving related. In addition, almost 3 of 4 drivers in all fatal crashes are male illustrating the need to continue to focus on defensive driving outreach to this demographic.

The 2020 Minnesota Workplace Safety Dashboard is a joint effort of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Safety Council. The annual statistical report highlights several key worker safety and health indicators through 2018 and 2019, the most recent data available for most categories.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

○ Minnesota Safety Council President Paul Aasen is available for interviews. Contact Erin Petersen, 651-228-7314 erin.petersen@minnesotasafetycouncil.org

○ For more Minnesota workplace injury and illness data, see:
  - https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/occhealth/data/index.html (occupational safety and health indicators)

The Minnesota Safety Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preventing injuries on the road, at work, at home, and in the community. For more information, see www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org.

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry oversees the state's programs for apprenticeship, construction codes and licensing, occupational safety and health, wage and hour standards, and workers' compensation. Visit them online at www.dli.mn.gov.

The Minnesota Department of Health’s mission is to protect, maintain and improve the health of all Minnesotans. Visit www.health.state.mn.us for more information.