

911 Telecommunicator Pension Benefits Working Group

Date: October 14, 2021

To: Members of the 911 Telecommunicator Pension Benefits Working Group

From: Susan Lenczewski, Executive Director, LCPR

Subject: Workers' compensation data for 911 dispatchers from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry

Attachment: [DoLI Dispatcher Work Comp Comparison Tables.pdf](#) (Set of seven spreadsheets, tabbed as Claim status, Nature of injury, Event or exposure, Worker demographics, Tenure expanded, Disability duration, Permanent disability)

Brian Zaidman, Senior Research Analyst, Research and Statistics, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, responded to my request for data on workers compensation claims filed by job category, specifically, for the categories of 911 telecommunicators, correctional officers, and all other public employees, over at least a 10-year period, if possible, to determine if there are any trends.

Brian responded with an email that attached an Excel file with tabs comparing workers' compensation claims filed by dispatchers, corrections workers, and all other public workers in a variety of ways, over differing periods, depending on the data available. Brian noted in his email:

The results need to be treated as tentative because of the very small number of dispatcher claims. I have included a discussion of the results on each sheet below the table. Also note that it is quite possible that some corrections workers at the city and county level are included in the "all other public worker" group instead of the corrections group because they were not properly identified as corrections workers on their injury report.

Please keep in mind that this data was compiled from claims filed, so none of the percentages in the spreadsheets are percentages of all 911 telecommunicators, correctional officers, or other public employees. The Department does not collect data on total numbers of employees in these categories, so it was not possible for Brian to run percentages such as, for example, the number of claims filed by dispatchers as a percentage of the total number of dispatchers. To illustrate this with another example: The spreadsheet showing "Job tenure" or "Tenure expanded" shows job tenure of dispatchers, correctional employees, and all other public employees who filed workers' compensation claims (not of all dispatchers, correctional employees, and others).

For convenience, the following are excerpts of notes or discussion provided by Brian below each spreadsheet. These are helpful because they provide Brian's analysis of the data presented and, in some cases, offer conclusions that can be drawn from the data. (The yellow highlighting in the spreadsheets were added by Brian and are referred to in his notes.)

For the spreadsheet at the tab labeled “Nature of injury”:

Sprains, strains and tears account for the largest number of injuries for all three worker groups.

For the spreadsheet at the tab labeled “Event or exposure”:

Overexertion and bodily reaction is the most common event leading to accepted indemnity claims for dispatchers and all other public workers. For corrections workers, violence is the most common event. Exposure is elevated among corrections workers for the 2018-2020 period because of COVID-19 claims. Overexertion is often due to lifting, carrying, pulling or pushing objects or bodily movements such as twisting and reaching.

For the spreadsheet at the tab labeled “Worker demographics”:

- 1. The majority of the dispatchers were female, unlike the injured workers in the other two groups.*
- 2. The dispatcher age distribution was similar to the distribution for all other public workers. There was a lower percentage of corrections workers age 55 or older.*
- 3. Job tenure was similar for all three groups, with the majority of workers having more than five years of job tenure.*
- 4. The dispatcher worker residence distribution was similar to the distribution for all other public workers., with a majority living in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Corrections workers were more likely to live outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area.*

For the spreadsheet at the tab labeled “Tenure expanded”:

Dispatchers show a different distribution of job tenure than the comparison groups. Dispatchers have lower percentages of claims among workers with less than 10 years of job tenure, then have higher percentages among workers in the 10-19 year tenure groups and among workers with at least 25 years of job tenure. The percentage of indemnity claims among workers with 20 or more years of tenure is also higher than for the comparison groups.

For the spreadsheet at the tab labeled “Disability duration”:

Total mean and median weeks of TTD benefits were higher for dispatchers than for the comparison groups. This could result from dispatchers reporting, on average, more serious injuries than workers in the other groups because they are not making claims for relatively minor injuries. It could also result from differences among the groups in return-to-work opportunities and practices. However, dispatchers only had noticeably higher TTD (temporary total disability) durations for two of the five time periods.

For the spreadsheet at the tab labeled “Permanent disability”:

The three worker groups have very similar percentages of claims without a PPD (permanent partial disability) or settlement. Compared to the comparison groups, dispatchers are more likely to receive a settlement and less likely to be paid PPD benefits. Dispatchers were the only group with a higher percentage of claims receiving a settlement instead of PPD benefits.