



# Memorandum

## MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Reviewed by: AAA Date: 5/14/21  
General Manager

DATE: May 21, 2021  
TO: General Manager  
FROM: Safety & Risk Manager  
SUBJECT: Employee Injuries and Property Loss Incidents for Calendar Year 2020

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board of Directors accept report on Employee Injuries and Property Loss Incidents for Calendar Year (CY) 2020

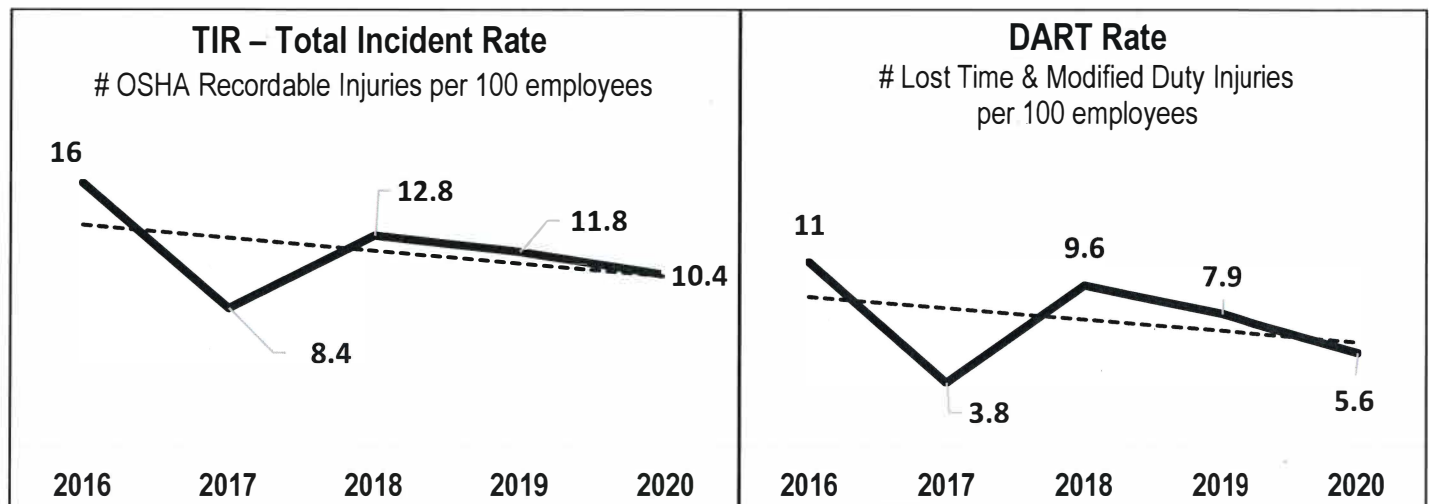
### DISCUSSION

**Employee Injuries:** The table below lists details on the number of OSHA reportable incidents and workers' compensation claims for the last five calendar years.

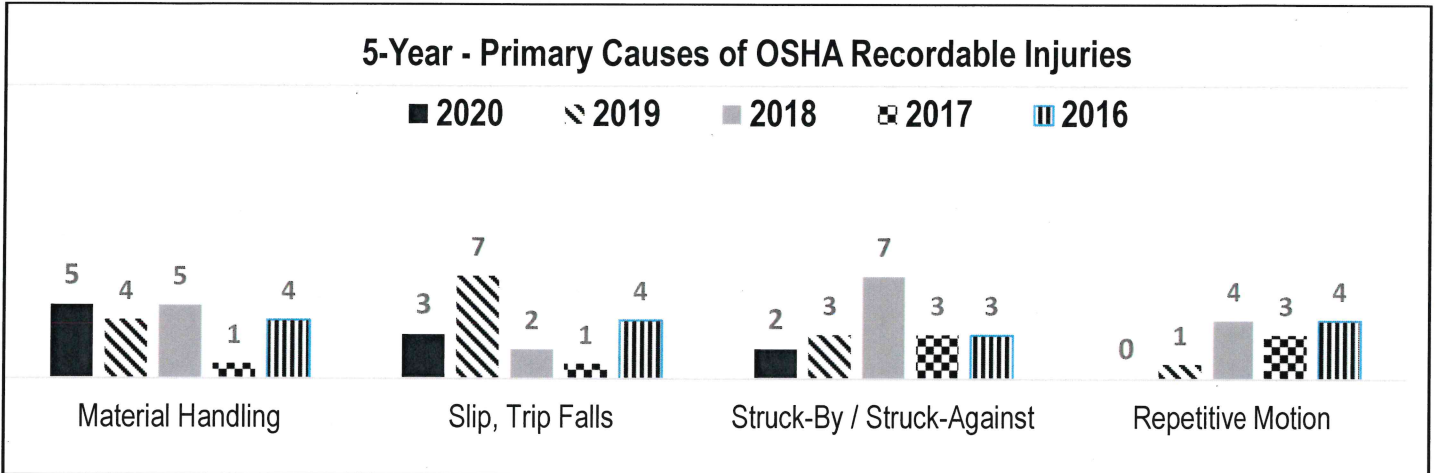
Calendar Year (CY)	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Total OSHA Recordable Incidents	13	18	20	9	16
Total Lost Workdays	237	380	227	161	168
Total Modified Duty Workdays	140	447	566	155	115
TIR – Total Incident Rate	10.4	11.8	12.8	8.4	16
DART – Days Away / Restricted Time Rate	5.6	7.9	9.6	3.8	11
Total Workers' Compensation Claims	\$255,782	\$332,649	\$340,946	\$188,281	\$208,533

The charts below illustrate a downward trend in the District's TIR (Total Incident Rate) and DART (Days Away Restricted Time) rates. TIR is the number of employees per 100 employees that experienced an OSHA recordable injury. DART rate indicates the number of serious injuries that occur per 100 employees. TIR & DART are standard metrics that OSHA utilizes to compare the injury rates of various types of organizations and industries.

The DART chart shows annual reductions in serious injuries over the last 3 years which is particularly significant given the higher risk for serious injury with MRF 2.0.



The chart below is a summary of the four primary causes of OSHA recordable injuries over the last five years. Since “Slip, Trip Fall” and “Struck-by/Struck-Against” incidents typically result in the most severe injuries, these have been our focus during that timeframe.

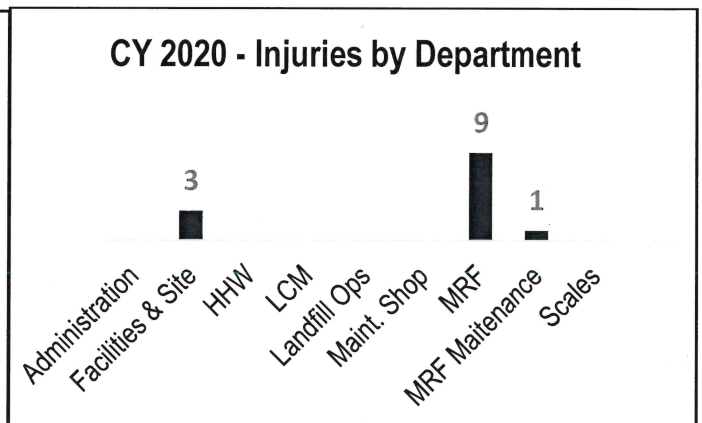
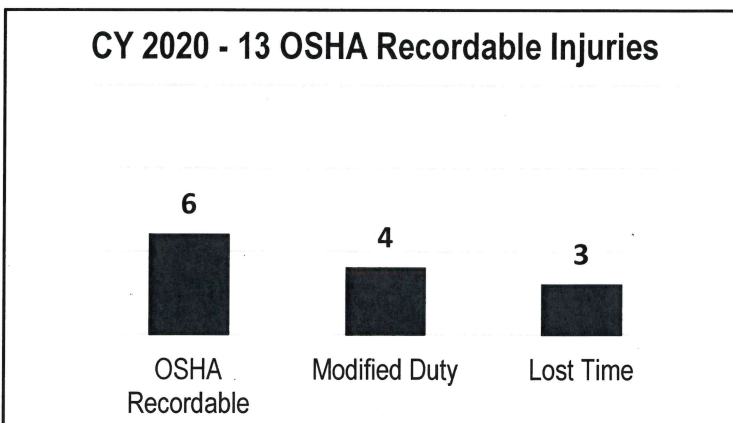


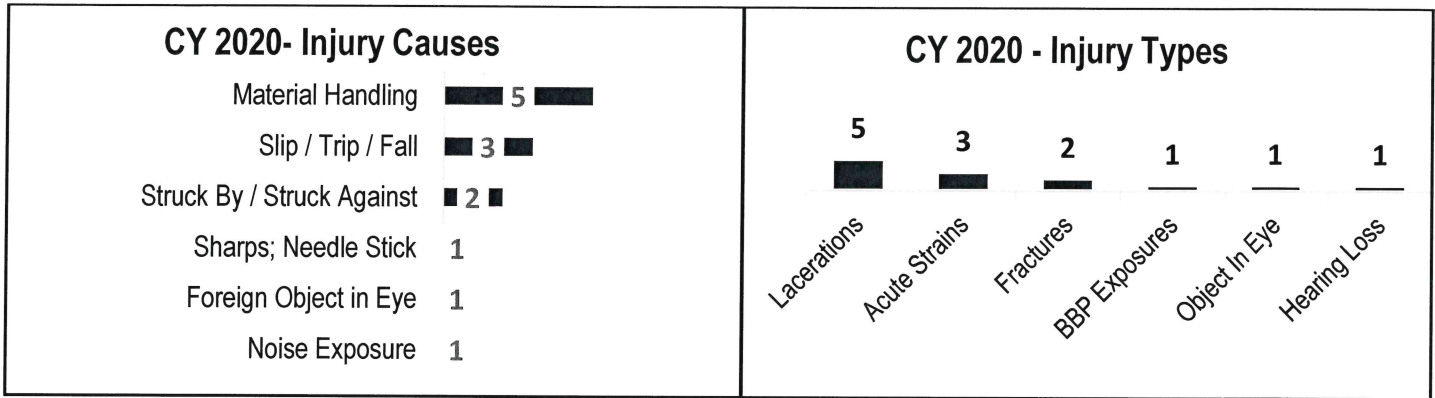
To address the high number of *Slip, Trip, Fall* (STF) injuries that occurred in the prior year, the Safety & Risk Department created a bilingual safety training course that all District employees were required to complete in 2Q 2020. The following charts indicate a reduction in STF injuries from seven in CY 2019 to three in CY 2020.

A new bilingual ergonomics safety training program was also launched in 2020 as a means to reduce the number & severity of soft-tissue injuries such as sprains & strains which arise from ergonomic factors such as awkward postures, overuse, and repetitive motion, etc.

In CY 2020 there were only three acute strain injuries & zero injuries attributed to cumulative trauma from ergonomic factors. This is significant achievement given the high number of repetitive motions on the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) 2.0 Sort Lines. On average, an employee conducts approximately 5 million picks per year. This is twice the pick rate of MRF 1.0. The MRF Operations staff have implemented two key administrative controls to reduce ergonomic injuries:

- Daily before-shift stretching exercises for staff.
- Sort Line employees switch to the opposite side of the conveyor ½ way through their shift to avoid overworking one side of the body.





**Worker’s Compensation:** In CY 2020 there was a total of thirteen new Worker’s Compensation (WC) claims filed resulting in a total cost of \$255,782. This estimated total cost includes the actual expenses paid to date and the estimated reserves for future medical expenses to be paid until the CY 2020 generated claims are closed.

The annual cost of WC claims does not necessarily increase with the number of injuries, but mainly due to the severity of the injuries and the expediency of claim closure. Of the thirteen new WC claims filed in CY 2020, three remained open at the time of this report. Two of these three were due to STF incidents and the other resulted from a Stuck-by incident. These three incidents represent just 23% of the total number of injuries but account for 79% (\$202,537) of the total cost of CY 2020 worker’s compensation claims.

Due to the on-going concern about the severity of STF injuries, the new STF training course will become an annual training requirement for all District employees.

**Other Safety Concerns:** There were significant challenges for the District concerning the COVID-19 pandemic in CY 2020 and new Cal OSHA regulations required the generation of a COVID-19 Prevention Plan. Key elements of the new regulation required the tracking and investigation of all positive coronavirus cases for potential workplace exposures. The regulation also defined an COVID-19 minor outbreak as three cases in a 2-week period and a major outbreak as twenty cases in a 30-day period.

The District experienced a total number of sixteen positive cases throughout the pandemic from July 2020 through January 2021. These were determined to be non-work-related exposures and the District did not experience any type of Cal OSHA defined COVID-19 outbreak.

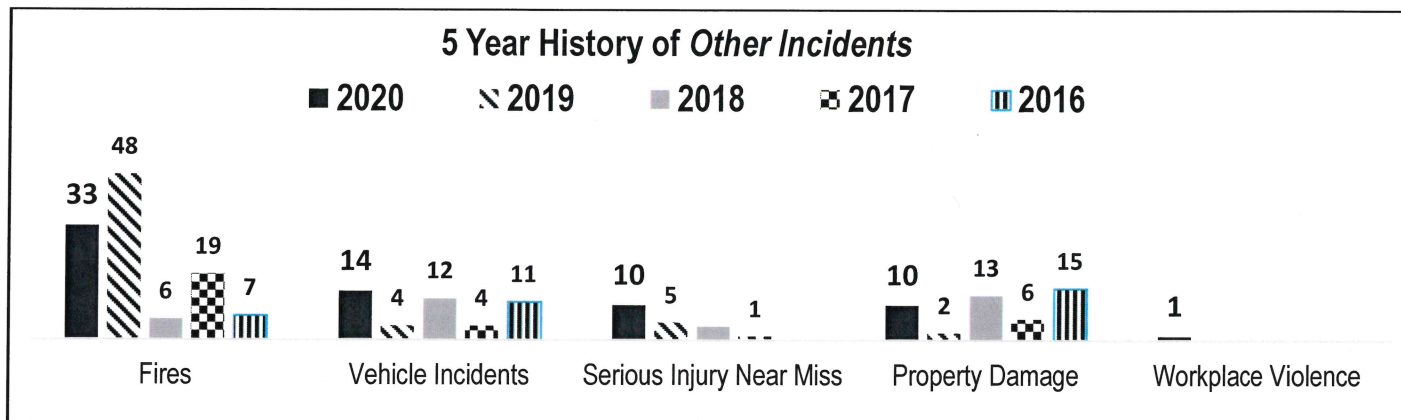
An unusual safety concern occurred in September and October of 2020 due to the local wildfires. A Cal OSHA regulation requires that workplaces monitor the Air Quality Index (AQI) for PM 2.5 (Particulate Matter 2.5 microns) when there are wildfires in the area and take actions if the AQI falls in the unhealthy category. For several weeks, we were required to monitor the AQI forecast for PM 2.5. When it the exceeded 150, we were required to voluntarily offer all outdoor employees N95 respirators. If this AQI reached 500, then respirators were mandatory for all outdoor employees. Fortunately, only a few days exceeded the unhealthy threshold during this timeframe.

**Property Loss & Other Incidents:** There was a total number of 68 *other incidents* that were non-employee injuries in CY 2020. The chart on the following page illustrates the types of *other incidents* that have occurred over the last 5 years.

The increase in fires over the last few years continues to be a major concern for District staff as the most of these are caused by small lithium-ion batteries that are difficult to detect at the Landfill or the Materials Recovery Facility. On August 1, 2020, a significant fire on the Landfill broke out afterhours and destroyed the landfill coverage tarps.



The District’s Communications Department is actively engaged in a public education campaign that focuses on the hazards of improper disposal of lithium-ion batteries.



In CY 2020 there were fourteen reported *vehicle incidents*. All of the reported *near miss incidents* (10) and nine of the ten *property damage incidents* were the result of these same fourteen *vehicles incidents*. The District Landfill Operations and Material Recovery Facility departments have implemented enhanced signage throughout their areas to improve the public’s understanding of the site and proper traffic flow. To further address vehicle incidents, a new bilingual Annual Safety Refresher Training Course which includes *safe driving techniques* was created by Safety & Risk staff that will be given to all staff in July 2021.

There was one *workplace violence incident* in CY 2020 involving a member of the public threatening a District employee. In February of 2020, the Monterey County Sheriff’s Department had conducted on site *Workplace Violence Safety Training* for all District staff. During this same time, the Sherriff Department’s representative reviewed the District’s Workplace Violence Safety Policy, SSP #1-03 and Emergency Response Plan, SSP 1-10 and made recommendations for improvement. The District’s response to the actual incident in October 2020 was in accordance with their recommendations and our updated training and procedures.

There were not any material property loss claims filed in CY 2020.

**Third Party Audit:** The District was audited for safety and risk in October 2020 by the Special District Risk Management Authority (SDRMA). The SDRMA auditor reviewed the District’s safety program documents and inspected the following facilities: Administration Building; Household Hazardous Waste; Maintenance Shop & Offices; Site Maintenance Shop; MRF Sort Lines and Offices; Landfill Operations and spoke with on-site contractors as well as our employees.

SDRMA performed prior audits in 2013 and 2016 that resulted in significant high-risk findings. The auditor did not identify any life-threatening hazards in the 2020 audit and had many favorable comments about our people, our safety program and safety culture.

**CONCLUSION**

The reduction in STF and Struck-by incidents has had a positive impact on reducing the number of serious injuries and worker’s compensation costs in CY 2020. The five-year downward trend of both TIR and DART is a significant accomplishment given the increased risk for serious injury in the Materials Recovery Facility 2.0.

  
Kacey L. Christie