



Regional Municipality of Durham
WSIB Claim Process Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Because of the increasing costs of the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB claims), Leading Edge Group (LEG) was engaged by the Regional Municipality of Durham (the Region) to conduct a Lean review and analysis on the current work practices used to process WSIB claims in the organization. To this end, a team of subject matter experts from the Region was assembled to map the current state of the process with a view to identifying inefficiencies due to waste, barriers and bottlenecks and uncovering solutions through means of root cause analysis.

Current state review and analysis leveraged data collection through direct interviews conducted by a Senior Lean Consultant with LEG with strategic process members, all of whom are included on the project team. As this project evolved, the team quickly expanded the scope to include the overall WSIB claims process, interactions and methods. This holistic approach was deemed a better vantage point to aid and encourage prevention of injuries/claims, together with the submission of accurate information, allowing for effective management of the claim, from claim entitlement to file closure, and better claim decisions by WSIB.

From the process mapping exercise, the team was able to identify areas of concern or waste and further explore solutions to a selection of these issues, by means of root cause analysis. These solutions were then assigned to the appropriate person/department for execution, as outlined in table 1.

This report outlines the journey taken by the project team, from data collection and interviews, Lean training and project participation in mapping the current state, to the identification of proposed solutions. From these activities, LEG have provided several key findings, supported by an action plan to manage completion of assigned tasks.

Overall deliverables for this engagement include the following:

1. A detailed current state value stream map of the WSIB claims process
2. A detailed future state map and an ideal state map for paperless environment
3. A one-page summary of the top key findings
4. A one-page summary of recommendations
5. An action list for implementation of agreed solutions
6. A final report

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

EPF	Employee Participant Form
ITOF	Intent to Object Form
NFA	No Further Action
LOE	Loss of Earnings
PLOE	Partial Loss of Earnings
CBA	Covered by Advances
CM	Case (Claims) Manager
TAWP	Temporary Accommodated Work Plan
IMF	Initial Medical Form
FAF	Functional Abilities Form
RDPS	Region of Durham Paramedic Services
ERC	Employee Record Change
NOR	Notification of Return Form
RTW	Return to Work
STIPP	Short Term Income Protection Plan
OIRF	Occupational Incident Report Form

INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

The scope of this project was changed at the outset, as it soon became obvious that efficiencies to the timeliness of the WSIB claims reporting system, while welcome, would not affect the overall cost of WSIB claims within the Region of Durham (the Region) significantly, as late reporting fees are very low. To achieve a worthwhile result, the multi-disciplinary internal project team felt that a holistic investigation of the entire WSIB claims system and all the stakeholders within it, would provide a greater return on investment. This was to be achieved by assembling a team of subject matter experts, from different parts of the organization, to gain background information and personal experience of the challenges regarding the WSIB claims process.

Following this, the team would then progress through Lean facilitation, to develop current and future process maps of the WSIB reporting process to gain a deep understanding of where the problems and waste were occurring in the process. Further focus on problem issues would then see the introduction and application of root cause analysis techniques to clearly identify pain points or improvement opportunities that are prioritized and detailed with execution responsibility in a future action plan.

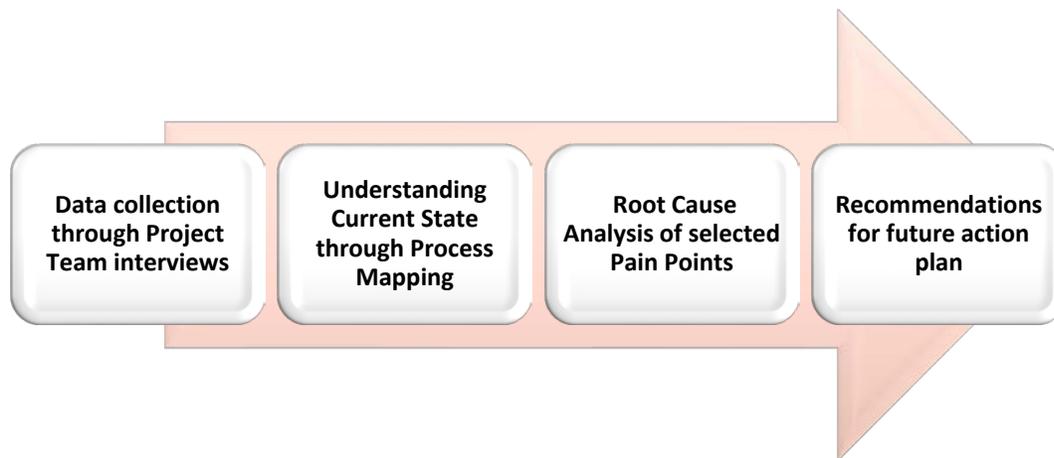


Figure 1. High Level Approach

Lean is a systematic approach to identifying and eliminating wasteful activities in a process through continuous improvement. The key focus of Lean Thinking is identifying value from the perspective or lens of the customer. Activities in a process are viewed through this lens by distinguishing value-added steps from non-value-added steps. Wasteful activities are eliminated until, eventually, every step adds value to that process. By minimizing/eliminating wasteful activities, a Lean process can be achieved through enabling the flow of a product or service at the pull of the customer, so that the service can be responsive to customer needs.

The term 'Lean' is applied to a process because a Lean process utilizes:

- less operational space,
- fewer financial resources,

- fewer materials and services, and
- less time to deliver a service to its customers.

Lean Thinking is not a manufacturing strategy or a cost-reduction program, but a philosophy that can be applied to a variety of organizations. This is because it is focused on processes. All organizations are made up of a series of processes, sets of activities or steps intended to create value for people who are dependent on them - namely customers and colleagues.

Lean Thinking is based around the application of a number of tools and strategies aimed at streamlining all aspects of a process. These tools are intended to reduce unnecessary labour, space, capital, materials, equipment and time involved in the delivery of appropriate services to customers.

Using the principles and tools associated with Lean to reduce and eliminate waste enables organizations to increase their quality of service. It enables them to:

- operate more quickly and efficiently at lower costs,
- become more responsive to the needs of customers,
- focus on quality, and
- increase service levels without increasing costs.

Lean principles and tools help organizations to ensure their employees' experience increases job satisfaction and that their customers receive the best possible service.

CURRENT STATE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

In recent years the Region has seen a sharp rise in WSIB claims costs. On investigation, there appears to be a number of reasons for this including;

- A lack of effective incident report completion,
- The introduction of presumptive legislation for paramedics (PTSD), the introduction of entitlement for chronic mental stress and an increase of psychological claims related to physical injuries, and
- A lack of accountability at department management level for WSIB claim costs incurred as a result of occupational injuries.

Our analysis of the WSIB reporting and claims management process began with a Lean training event on October 31st, which examined fundamental process information regarding the WSIB reporting and claims management process as it currently operates. Consistent with Lean methodology, we discussed the importance of value and waste as it applies to any process, highlighted customer expectations, and identified the types of waste that exist in the process.

From a Lean principles point of view, we looked to identify the value of our process from the customer's perspective. We then examined all the components of the process to ensure that they are supplying that value in an efficient, effective, and predictable fashion for the right outcome.

On investigation of the WSIB reporting and claims management process, we identified many items that were deemed barriers to flow, such as;

- A lack of information on incident reports including; contributing factors, preventative measures, delays in receiving reports from departments and other conflicting priorities within the department
- A lack of information from Doctors when completing a WSIB Form 8:
 - Delays in treatment
- A lack of timely adjudication from WSIB, delays in decisions from WSIB, and ineffective WSIB call centre/customer service model
- Manual Occupational Incident Report Form (OIRF) – information is manually input into Parklane¹
- Electronic OIRF (current pilot) – items are selected from drop down menus without adequate investigation
- Increasing complexity of WSIB claims
- Time spent following up on claims (internal with departments and external with WSIB)
- Parklane is simple to use but has limited reports and other aspects
- Manual calculations for WSIB top up and four weeks prior earnings, along with different top up calculation methods for various bargaining units

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

The team performed root cause analysis on the area deemed to have the most challenges when it came to completing incident reports and investigations. The following cause and effect diagram² (Figure 2) highlight one potential root cause, which is Supervisors having competing demands in resident care which can take precedence, depending on the situation. However, their role in completing the OIRF should be more clearly defined.

¹ Parklane is the database that manages all WSIB claims and costs for the Region.

² A cause and effect diagram, also called a fishbone diagram or Ishikawa diagram, is a visualization tool for categorizing the potential causes of a problem in order to identify its root causes.

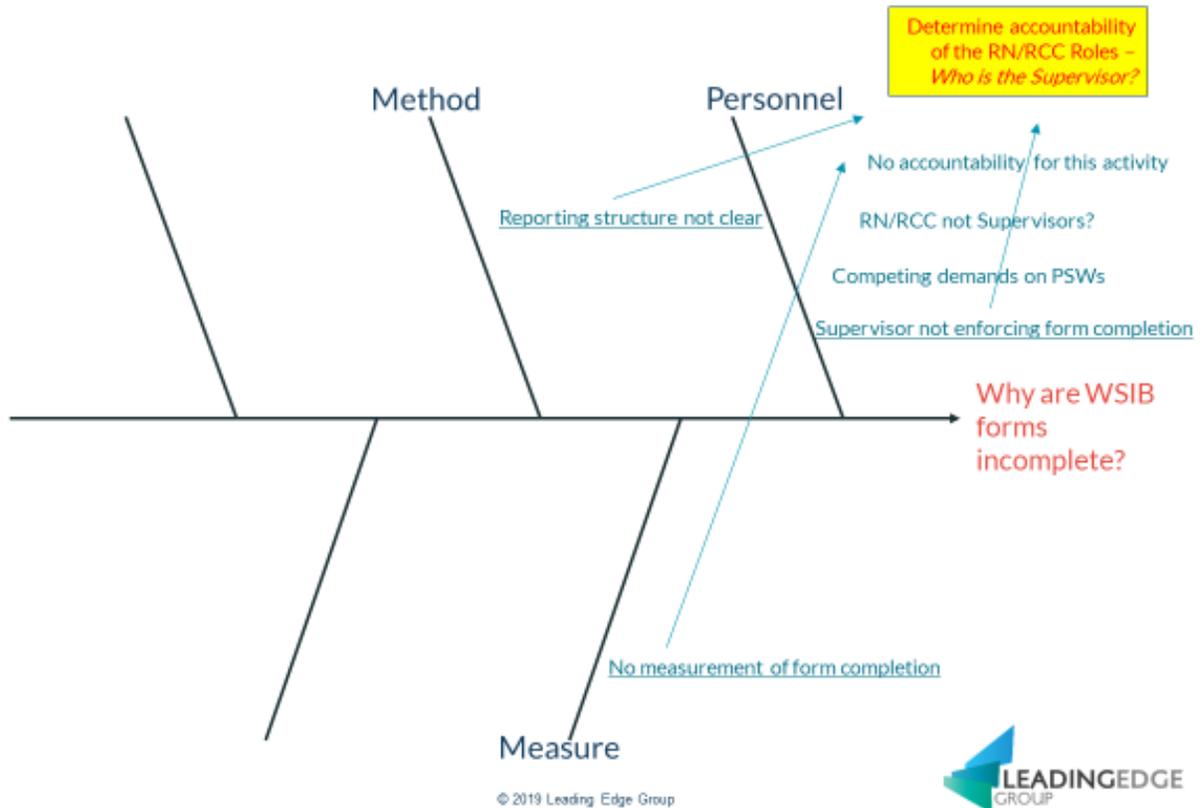


Figure 2. Cause and Effect Diagram

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The project team completed an A3 report³ to help them define the problem clearly and outline the objectives necessary for success. WSIB costs are increasing, also the time spent managing claims is a concern. Some claims can span several years resulting in thousands of dollars in claims costs. As the Region, like many municipalities, is a Schedule 2 Employer with WSIB, the Region pays all WSIB related costs including a 25% administrative fee. Departments/managers are not held accountable financially for their respective WSIB costs and/or costs incurred related to inadequate investigations, lack of detailed reporting, and follow-up.

³ A3 problem solving is a structured problem-solving and continuous-improvement approach that provides a simple and strict procedure that guides problem solving by workers.

Reasons for Focusing on this Area

- Incomplete incident reports coming from departments are requiring a lot of follow up by CS-HR-DM.
- Supervisors don't necessarily understand the importance of filling out the incident reports thoroughly and some only fill it out occasionally as they have infrequent staff incidents.
- Thorough and accurate initial reporting to WSIB increases the chance of the WSIB making the right claims decision which can greatly impact the cost and length of a claim.
- Investigations aren't always being done to identify root cause(s) of injuries which would prevent future injuries.
- To increase the efficiency of current resources for the Region.
- To be better aligned with corporate efficiency goals.
- To reduce and/or remove barriers for people returning back to work, especially if they have to be placed through the Region's Core Committee.
- The Region's WSIB claims costs are increasing exponentially every year.

The team encapsulated the problem within the following statement;

"Inefficiencies are resulting in wasteful Regional dollars when we fail to report accurate information to the WSIB in a timely way, which can negatively impact claims decisions by WSIB, including appeals. These inefficiencies, as well as proper internal follow up for prevention, have a significant impact on Regional claim numbers, costs, and staff resources."

With that problem statement in mind, the team then focused on a list of objectives aimed at reducing the Regions' exposure to WSIB claims costs:

1. Obtain accurate information from the Departments within 24 hours of an incident, and accurate updates throughout the life of the claim.
2. Continue to process incident report within 5 days (3-7 days is the WSIB guideline).
3. Ensure supervisory accountability for those filling out the Occupational Incident Reporting Form to ensure that it is filled out accurately, and that their related responsibilities (such as investigation and related follow-up) are carried out thoroughly within the allotted timeframe.
4. Ensure departmental accountability for WSIB claim costs.

CURRENT STATE VALUE STREAM MAPPING

The next task was to construct a Value Stream Map (VSM)⁴ of the current process with the team, to truly understand how the WSIB claims reporting and management process really worked, and to help identify where all the non-value-added waste activities⁵ were adversely affecting the process. Before starting the VSM, the team identified the value stream⁶, required in to effectively process a claim from start to finish (Figure 3). The team highlighted the fact that the value stream claims fell into two categories; complex, and non-complex claims. From these macro steps, the team mapped out all the micro steps that support this process from end to end.

Identify the Value Stream

WSIB REPORTING PROCESS



Complex V Non-Complex

Figure 3. Value Stream

⁴ A value stream map is a visual tool that displays all critical steps in a specific process and quantifies easily the time and volume taken at each stage. Value stream maps show the flow of both materials and information as they progress through the process.

⁵ A non-value added activity is an action taken that does not increase the worth of what is delivered to the customer.

⁶ A value stream is the set of all steps from the start of your value creation until the delivery of the end result to your customer.

Once the process steps were successfully mapped, the team then began to quantify the resulting information which enabled them to determine the process lead time⁷ (total time required to process and manage a claim), the total percentage of value added-time⁸ and total percentage of non-value-added time⁹ as outlined in Figure 4.

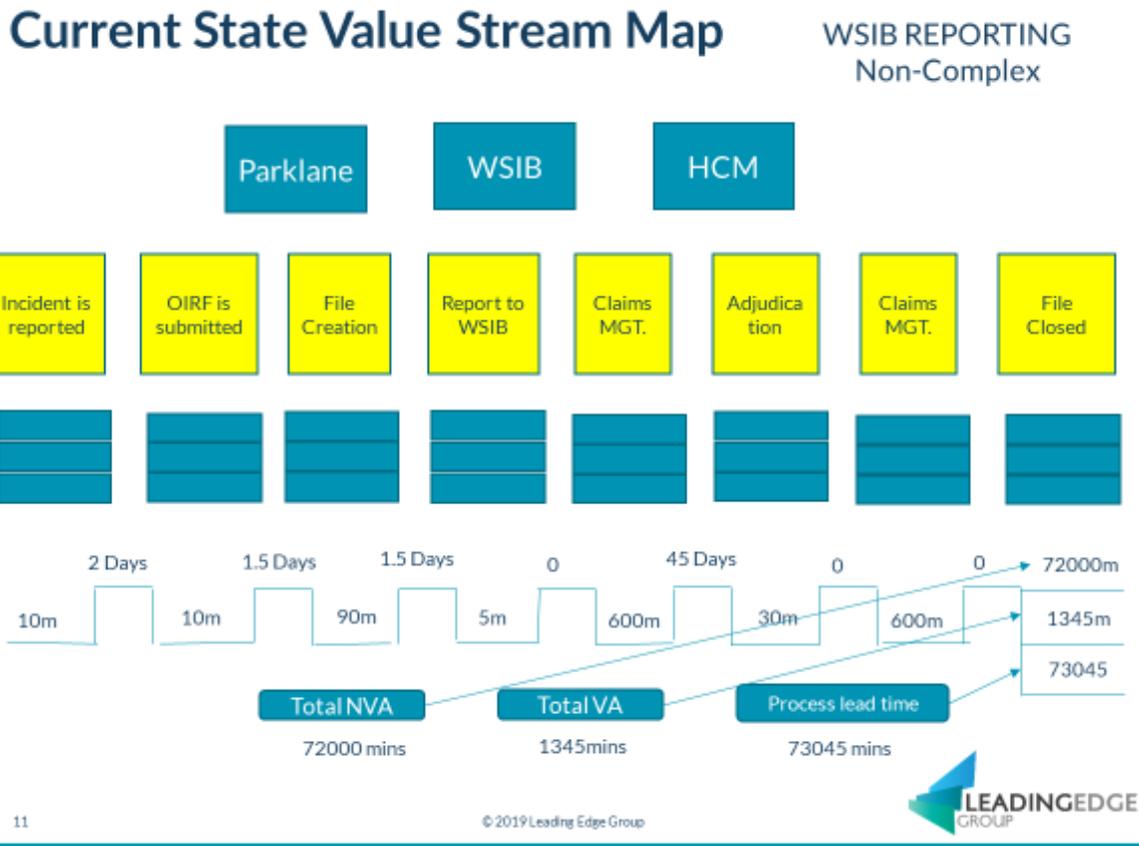


Figure 4. Current State Map – Non-Complex

As we can see in the VSM of the current state of the non-complex process in Figure 4 above, the average total processing time (lead time) for a WSIB claim in the Region is 73,045 minutes (approximately 60 days). The value-added (VA) portion of the process accounts for approximately 2% (1,345 minutes) of all time spent, while the non-value added (NVA) portion is 98% at 72,000 minutes (or 59 days approximately). Most of this NVA time is due to waiting for information and adjudications from the WSIB (45 days), however significant time is spent

⁷ Lead time is the time between the beginning of a process or project and the appearance of its results.

⁸ Value added time is the time spent that improves the outcome of a process.

⁹ Non-value-added time is any time spent on a step in a process that adds no value to the finished product or service.

processing the claims in house due largely to incomplete or inaccurate incident reports, and to a lesser extent an inefficient paper driven process.

The complex version of this process deals with longer term claims such as those where employees may have:

- Additional non-occupational conditions,
- Claims for both physical and psychological injuries, and/or
- Complex mental injuries.

The process also include claims where:

- Treatment was delayed and/or was not appropriate,
- The employee is believed to be misrepresenting their level of disability, and/or
- The employee is unable to return to their own job.

Current State Value Stream Map

WSIB REPORTING
Complex

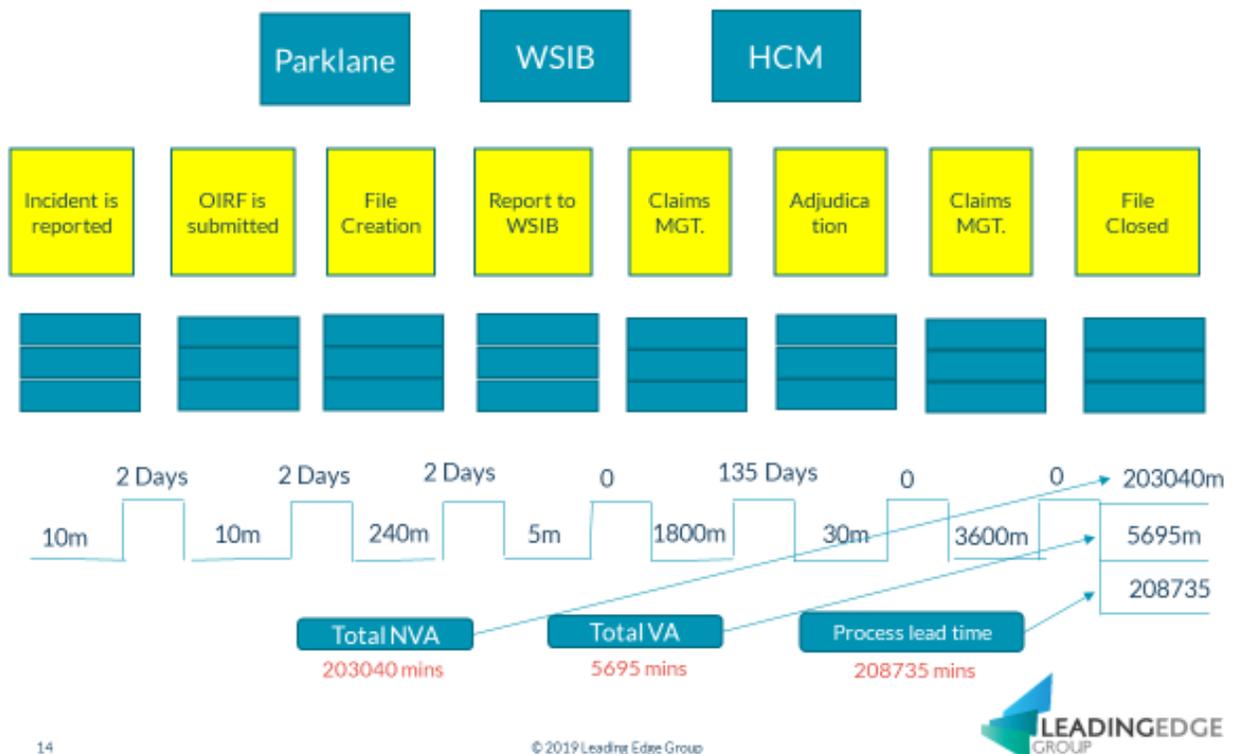


Figure 5. Current State Map – Complex

As seen in Figure 5, the total processing time (lead time) has risen from 60 days for non-complex claims, to 144 days approximately for complex claims. Again, this can be accounted for by the long adjudication period and inefficient claims management processes at WSIB.

CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS AND SOLUTION GENERATION

Having captured all the tasks and associated data and information for the WSIB reporting and claims management process, the team was able to commence analysis of current state process map (attached) and generation of solutions to achieve improvement. This involved a brainstorming session to propose solutions to counteract any highlighted barriers to flow, or problem items identified in the current state process map.

The table below is the result of the team brainstorming potential improvements to each task in the current state process map (attached).

Task	Possible Improvement Ideas
Incident Occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement of employee with a focus on health and safety prevention for employee welfare (particularly challenging where the nature of the work is high demand and low control) ▪ Performance of employees is managed / documented by supervisor ▪ All employee incidents should have a rigorous investigation by supervisor ▪ Make all departments accountable for their respective WSIB claims costs ▪ Put accountability for WSIB claims costs on performance management (Healthy Workplace competency has been drafted and to be added to performance management form in 2020 with launch of e-performance) ▪ All fields in paper incident report to be accurately and thoroughly completed the first time and extend roll-out of On-Line Incident Report forms ▪ CS-HR – DM to provide regular training/education for supervisors on incident reporting process and why it is important ▪ Increased prevention focus to prevent health and safety occurrences and resulting WSIB claims
OIRF is received by WSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make email OIRF mandatory short term (short term) ▪ Make online OIRF report form mandatory (long term)
File Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure correct time entries in HCM / WorkForce by timekeepers ▪ Collect employee’s personal email for HCM at time of hire
Task	Possible Improvement Ideas
Claims Management 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supervisor updates to CS-HR-DM must be accurate and timely ▪ Add next RTW meeting to AWO ▪ Develop NOR & ERC that can be completed and submitted online (like NOL is now)

Task	Possible Improvement Ideas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make electronic submission of NOL (immediately) and NOR & ERC (when online version available) mandatory ▪ Make TAWP completion by supervisor mandatory ▪ Make Supervisor responsible for coordinating RTW meetings where CS-HR-DM does not need to be involved ▪ CS-HR-DM to develop templates for more efficient communication with WSIB ▪ For those using WorkForce, allow Timekeeper to enter directly into HCM
Adjudication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CS-HR-DM to advise department managers of WSIB decisions when appropriate
Claims Management 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is paper & electronic record required by Finance for WSIB invoices? (Finance has proposed a streamlined process that will benefit HR and Finance and is in the process of confirming the change) ▪ Continue to limit RTW meetings to only those that advance (add value) to process

FUTURE STATE VALUE STREAM MAP

When we apply these solutions to our current state, under the assumption that they are all achievable, we create the ideal future state map, as shown in Figure 6 below. The Future State VSM increases the incident reporting time from 10 to 30 minutes with the intention of investing more time into thorough and accurate incident reporting and investigations to save more time later on in the process and mitigate the duration and cost of the WSIB claim.

Future State Value Stream Map

WSIB REPORTING
Non-Complex

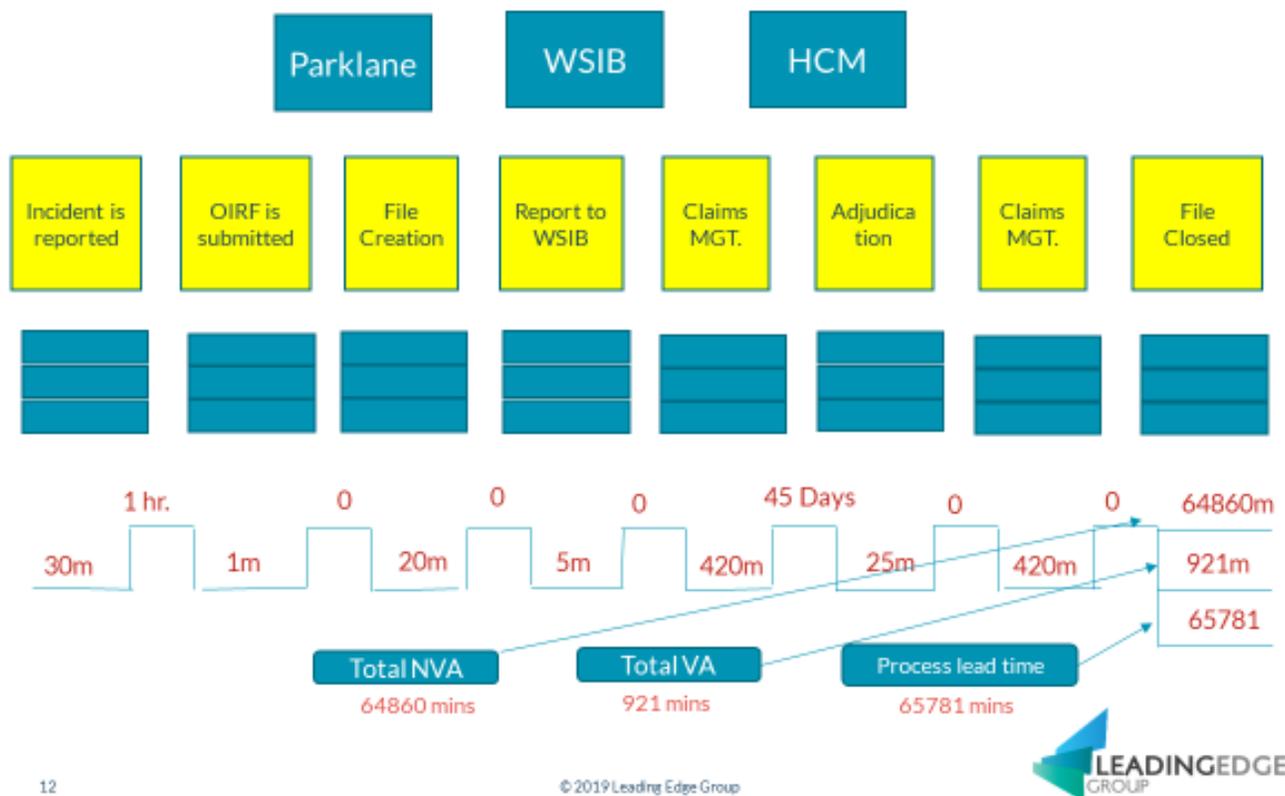


Figure 6. Future State Map Non-Complex

FUTURE STATE IMPACT

When we compare the Current State and Future State VSM, (Figure 7), we see a clear improvement of 30% in the VA portion of the process, while NVA and overall lead time have improved by 10%. To achieve these results, the team assumed certain future process

improvements would be implemented, namely, ensuring that all incident forms are filled out accurately and completely before submission to CS-HR-DM WSI case managers.

As we can see, although all improvements are important, the 7 hours reduction in cycle time (VA) has marginal impact on the process as a whole, due to the fact that the WSIB portion of the process, which is out of the Region’s control, is still 45 days on average for non-complex cases, and can take up to 135 days for complex cases. It was on this basis that the team focused its efforts on better incident recording, investigation, and prevention, through increased future education of all staff and WSIB cost accountability by department.

Current Vs. Future State

WSIB REPORTING
Non-Complex

	Current State	Future State	Savings
NVA Time	72000m	64860m	7140m = 4.9 days or 10%
VA-Time	1345m	921m	424m = 7 hrs. or 31%
Lead Time	73045	65781	7,264m = 5 days or 10%

Figure 7. Current V Future State

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

1. INVESTIGATION

There needs to be a much more rigorous approach to incident investigation overall. Currently, there is a lack of a thorough investigation and preventative measures taken to avoid a repeat occurrence. This can happen for different reasons, for example, in some cases it seems that there is no clear responsibility as to who should perform these tasks. Then, there is also the matter of having adequate time to accomplish these requirements, as other operational issues may take priority (such as resident matters needing to take precedence in LTC facilities).

2. FORM COMPLETION

A major source of wasted effort and time highlighted in our current state VSM, was the omission of information, and accuracy of information on the incident report forms. Again, as in the previous investigation example, there is a lack of clarity as to who is responsible and accountable for filling out the incident forms with accurate and full information. This in turn causes a major increase in workload for those processing the claims with repeated phone calls, and emails to try and collect information required to complete the WSIB Form 7. It is acknowledged that time and competing duties can be a factor in certain departments. Not understanding how incomplete or inaccurate information on the initial incident report adds extra work to the process is also a contributing factor.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY

The concept of accountability comes to the fore in reflecting on the whole WSIB claims process for the Region. Firstly, the department managers are not held accountable for the claims costs associated with their departments. It is a bill that is paid by Finance and allocated to budgets but with no accountability for the amount and therefore seems to carry less weight from a performance and responsibility point of view.

Similarly, not all supervisors are conducting thorough and accurate incident investigations. Appropriate preventative measures including adherence to safe work procedures are not being identified consistently. There is also a legislated responsibility (under the OHSA) on the supervisor role to provide employees with ongoing training in standard procedures related to health and safety and to ensure availability of related equipment.

More focus needs to be placed on educating and clarifying roles and responsibilities related to incident reporting and returning injured employees to work.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INVESTIGATION

Supervisors should be adequately trained to perform this function and should also be given the tools and appropriate time to complete the task.

2. FORM COMPLETION

In an ideal state, this task would be electronic submission only (online form) with mandatory fields to ensure completion. Again, this function should be the responsibility of the supervisor controlling that area where the incident occurred, to execute. Proper training should be provided along with adequate time to perform this task.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY

Each department head should be accountable for their respective WSIB costs, with a clear preventative plan and claims management control.

Department managers should also be responsible for ensuring supervisor compliance with regard to incident reporting and investigation.

The ideal state for this process is to go paperless as outlined in the ideal future state map (attached).

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Keep and/or print paper files only for claims that are not straightforward and that have potential for appeal or are being appealed.
2. Reduce the amount of information entered into Parklane for incidents that are not a WSIB claim.
3. Require the WSIDM claim owner to complete page 4 of the form to eliminate the need for printing the Form 7.
4. Form 7s, should be reviewed by the WSI supervisor in HR, only when required. Ensure that the initial WSI coordinator looking at the claim is responsible for error detection within the form. The CS-HR-DM Supervisor may review Form 7s for complex claims to ensure clear/consistent messaging to the WSIB.
5. Link or scan copies of Form 7, and the fax confirmation, to the electronic file to ensure accurate record keeping when reducing paper files.
6. Consider introducing a 2-week follow up meeting between the employee and supervisor regarding progression on Temporary Accommodated Work Plan (TAWP). This keeps the

employee in touch with the workplace and colleagues and mitigates the employee’s potential to get into a disabled mind-set.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

The following action plan was compiled based on the recommendations outlined in this report and were prioritized using a Pick Chart¹⁰.

What	Who	When
Obtain a copy of the Program of Care Assessment from WSIB for CS-HR-DM	CS-HR-DM WSI Case Managers	December 1, 2019
Send WSIB claims decisions to Transit to keep them updated	CS-HR-DM WSI Case Managers	December 1, 2019
Limit attributes to actual requirements (Parklane)	CS-HR-HSW/DM Managers	February 1, 2020
Transit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letters of expectation for not following procedures - Transit supervisor to ask employee about computer skills - Transit to identify short-term work for accommodation - Transit needs regular communication between Transit manager and initial supervisor reporting the incident - Schedule meeting for return to work (RTW) as soon as possible 	DRT Management	(To Be Confirmed)
Ensure an incident investigation is carried out in all departments where an employee WSIB claim has been filed.	CAO and Department Heads to hold all supervisory staff accountable for doing so	June 2020
What	Who	When
Performance of employees is consistently managed/documented (for example, when staff don’t follow procedure and an injury results)	CAO and Department Heads to hold all supervisory staff accountable for doing so	Reinforce as part of E-Performance launch in 2020
Collect employee’s personal email for HCM at time of hire or assign Region email addresses to every employee	CS-HR-Talent Acquisition and CS-IT	February 2020

¹⁰. A pick chart is a 2 x 2 matrix that prioritizes proposed solutions for a given topic/project by comparing the ease of implementation against the level of project impact (payoff) expected.

What	Who	When
Make department management accountable for WSIB costs and put accountability on performance management (WSIB & Safety)	CAO and Department Heads	June 2020
Roll out Parklane Online Incident Report (OLIR) to rest of organization (includes mandatory fields in the On-line Incident Report)	CS-HR-HSW and possibly CS-HR-HRIS	December 31, 2020
Regular training of supervisors regarding proper completion of Incident Reports and Investigations – also completion of OLIR – also supervisors providing accurate and timely updates to WSI – supervisor responsible for return to work meetings	CS-HR-HSW	December 2020
Increased prevention spending to prevent occurrences, where needed as identified through investigations and accountability – identify specifically in annual budgets	CAO and Department Heads	March 2020
Correct WSI entries in HCM/WorkForce – have a process discussion/refresher (lunch and learn or webinar) with LTC Timekeepers and Schedulers	CS-HR and Long - Term- Care	March 2020
Make submission of Notification of Return (NOR) form & Employee Record Change (ERC) electronic and mandatory	CS-HR and Finance	December 2020 Update
Implement new “utility” invoice process for WSIB invoices	Finance	December 2019
Need development of new archive rules for records retention and electronic file storage	Records Management	With Electronic Information Management Strategy

Table 1. Action List

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Region of Durham is currently incurring major costs from year to year, because of increasing WSIB claims costs. The reasons for the increase in claims costs are varied and span from system mis-use, to the costs related to presumptive legislation for First Responders, the introduction of entitlement for chronic mental stress and entitlement to psychological treatment for staff who have claims for physical injuries. As a Schedule 2 employer, this means that the Region will pay the full value of any approved claim, some of which will span several years. The Region, facilitated by a LEG Lean consultant, led a team of WSIB claims subject matter experts, to investigate and report on their current methods for

processing WSIB claims. Through the application of Lean tools and methodologies, the team have mapped the current process and developed some suggested improvements for the future.

The most pertinent of these improvements would be to;

- Continue to support any WSIB claimant by always providing an accommodated work program to return them to work as soon as practical, as well as a heightened awareness of investigation procedures.
- Initiate a more detailed level of incident investigation that promotes a better understanding of the underlying causes and increases the effectiveness of preventative actions. This should reduce the likelihood of recurrences of the same nature.
- Assign greater accountability for WSIB costs to department head level to ensure that these costs are visible, quantifiable, and comparable to specific departmental criteria (some departments will have greater exposure to traumatic mental stress and PTSD claims than others).
- Enhance the Region's WSIB claims processing and management process, by changing the current paper system to an "online system". This would negate the need for handling of paper files and folders and would update information instantaneously. An automated system would also allow for greater control of correct data input, by filtering the information supplied into the required format.

On the broader issues of accountability, responsibility, and training, the Region needs to ensure adequate resourcing of the process. Greater focus and investment at the front end of the process to improve the organizational awareness of incident handling and information accuracy of all incident reports, will avoid needless waste at the back end of the process (e.g. chasing information and processing erroneous claims). More accountability on incident investigation and WSIB cost control built into the system will bring a stronger focus on WSIB claims costs, mitigation, and incident prevention.