

Middle-Aged Workers

Data as of Q4 2023

Report updated September 23, 2024

WHO ARE MIDDLE-AGED WORKERS?

Though not specifically defined by Alberta Occupational Health and Safety, for the purposes of this report a "middle-aged worker" is between 25 and 54 years old with a median age of 35 to 44 years. Typically, these workers have multiple years of work history and have experienced many challenges and hazards within the oil and gas industry. Middle-aged workers are more likely to incur *Overexertion* and *Struck by object* injuries.

WHY ARE MIDDLE AGED WORKERS AT RISK?

Increased risk of injury in this group is attributed to:

- Risk normalization
- Loss of situational awareness¹
- Decrease in physical capacity
- Overexertion
- Perceived pressure to perform
- Increased life pressures (family, mortgage, etc.)

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS THESE RISKS?

- Competency assessments
- Hazard analysis and planning
- Mentoring junior employees
- Stretching and warm-up before starting work
- Supervisor and leadership training
- Involve them in implementing workplace improvements
- Encourage their participation in company initiatives, including proactive reporting

¹ Excerpt from ["SITUATION AWARENESS: MAKING SENSE OF THE WORLD"](#), *Human Factors 101: Introduction to human factors and work psychology*; June 23, 2022.

Losing situation awareness

A brief definition may be that *"If it feels wrong then it probably is"* - but we need something a little more scientific than that. Situation awareness is the understanding of what is happening now, and given that information, what may happen in the future. Given this, there are some clues that situation awareness is becoming degraded:

1. Fixation on one thing to the exclusion of everything else
2. Poor communications, such as vague or incomplete statements
3. Not following established procedures
4. Future states that were expected do not materialise
5. Not having the 'time to think'.

Situation awareness may be lost because of [fatigue](#), distractions, stressful situations, [high workload](#), vigilance failures, poorly presented information, forgetting key information and poor mental models. Optimising these (and other influences on human performance) is central to the human factors approach.

The result of losing situation awareness (or having an inadequate awareness) may be poor decision making, risk-taking and other unsafe behaviours.

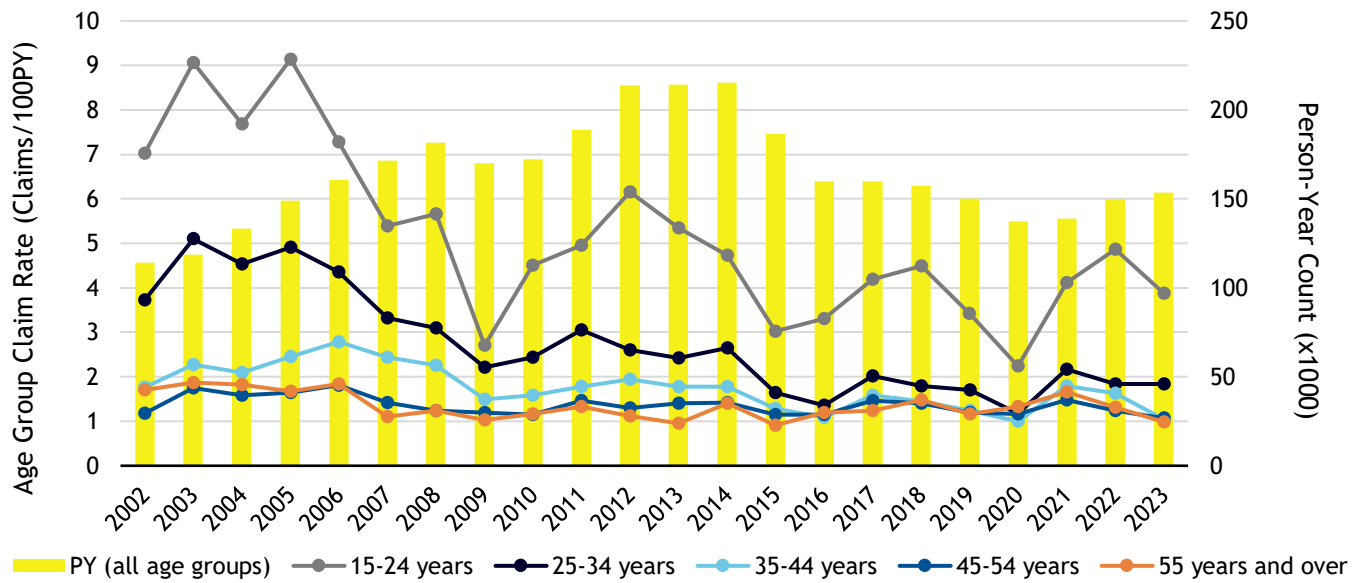
ENERGY SAFETY CANADA RESOURCES:

- [Supervisor Competency Program](#)
- Course | [Leadership for Safe Workplaces](#)
- [Formal Hazards Assessment Guide](#)
- Data Report | [Industry Growth and Worker Injury by Age Group](#)
- Safety Tool Kit | [Slips, Trips and Falls](#)

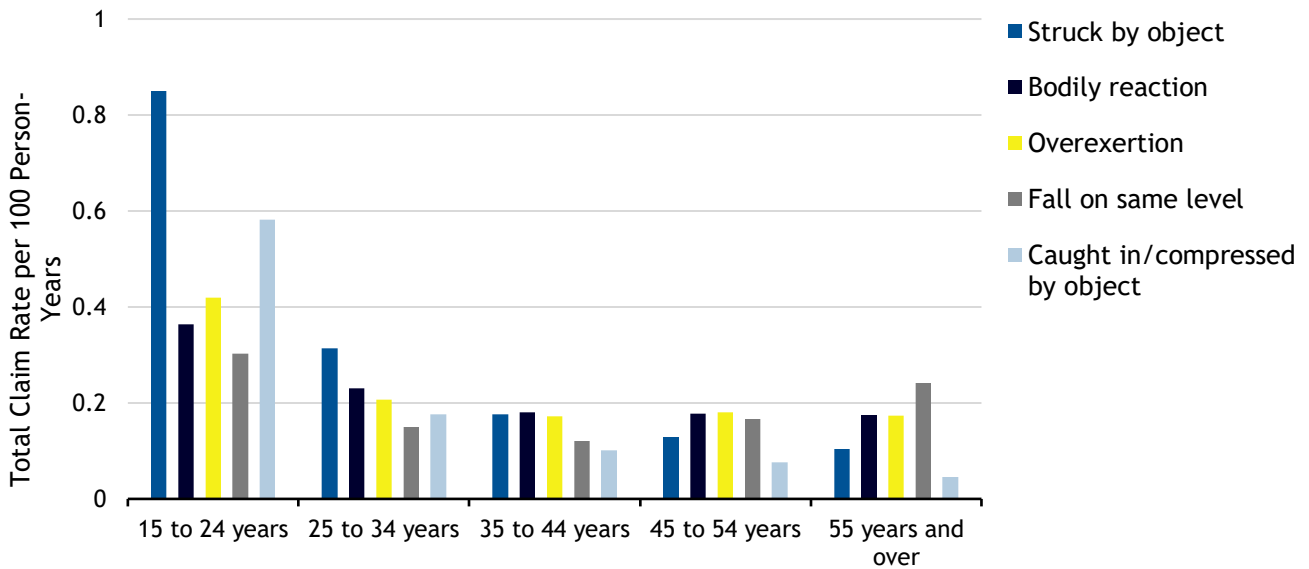
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Article | [Middle aged workers are feeling the squeeze](#)
- Article | [“Situation awareness: Making sense of the world”](#)

ALBERTA CLAIM RATE TREND BY AGE GROUP



TOP INJURIES BY AGE GROUP – ALBERTA 2017-2023



Note: Certain injuries are not reflected in these charts. Injuries caused by exposures over many years (e.g., noise) have been excluded.

Data Disclaimer: While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the data used in this report, data should be read as indicative of scope rather than exact figures. The variable nature of WCB Alberta claims management may be reflected in the data shown.