

Health and safety

GRI 403-1, 403-2, 403-3, 403-4, 403-5, 403-6

WHY HEALTH AND SAFETY CREATES VALUE

Protecting the health and safety of team members and our customers is of paramount importance to Bell. Neglecting health and safety may result in increased lost-time incidents and costs, decreased employee engagement, operational disruption, reduced profitability and risk of prosecution. At Bell, there is nothing more important than to have every team member return home safely at the end of each day.

OUR ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Bell strives to provide a healthy and safe workplace for all team members, as it is an integral part of the way we do business. Dedication and leadership bring health and safety to the forefront of our business, and we continue to develop programs to identify hazards and mitigate associated risks.

Management system and Corporate Safety Action Plan

Our Corporate Safety Action Plan (CSAP) is the foundation of our safety management system. Our management system seeks to ensure that Health and Safety (H&S) programs are managed in a systematic and diligent manner, that resources and responsibilities are clearly identified and that our progress is monitored and reviewed quarterly.

H&S programs are integrated into Bell's business units and subsidiaries that have designated H&S coordinators. This structure seeks to ensure compliance with operational requirements and continual reporting to the corporate H&S team.

We value the engagement and experience of our team members to look out for one another. We leverage our team members to support 180 local H&S committees across Canada, over 650 safety representatives and 10 corporate H&S committees that work in partnership with unions. As required by occupational H&S regulations, these committee members and representatives address local H&S concerns and perform workplace inspections. Collectively, these committees and representatives completed more than 6,830 workplace inspections in 2022, identifying and resolving issues, that left unaddressed, could have contributed to incidents. The Corporate H&S team collaborates with these committees and representatives for the development and implementation of prevention programs.

H&S training and qualification

All team members at Bell receive safety training specific to their job function. Training content is delivered through a variety of methods, including online documents, videos, instructor-led sessions, hands-on exercises and via manager supervision. Following a team member's initial training, a retraining cycle is established, the frequency for which is dependent on the subject material and risk level.

In 2022, we made significant progress on a defined safety qualification program for high-risk activities. Criteria for qualification include a combination of online and face-to-face training events, manager supervision and equipment inspections. We are moving toward proactively identifying employees with an upcoming program expiration, as they will be removed from performing the high-risk activity until their case is resolved.

Hazard Identification and Risk-Assessment Program

Bell's Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) program is at the core of managing health and safety across the company. This process allows us to assess the risks associated with different job functions and ensures that proper control measures are in place. The HIRA directive, standard assessment forms and training, provide guidance to all team members participating in the completion of HIRAs within their business unit or department.

In 2022, all HIRAs were finalized, therefore, all job functions in the company are assessed, and associated hazards, risks and controls are documented. We aim to review and update each HIRA at least every 3 years, in order to capture newly identified risks arising from a change of task, process, equipment or legislation, when applicable.

Hazard reporting, incident management and investigation

Bell's centralized incident investigation process continues to improve our ability to analyze trends. Our Corporate H&S team has trained safety incident investigators who coach and support managers on how to conduct incident investigations. Reporting such incidents through our National Incident Centre enables us to implement a swift and coordinated response in case of a severe incident.

Our incident management system allows us to govern incident reporting and investigation timelines, as well as identify areas where improvement is required to enhance our prevention programs. In 2022, we introduced additional control measures to improve the accuracy of incident reports.

Additionally in 2022, we had further improvements to our H&S Hazardous Condition Management program, following the launch of a new company-wide hazard reporting application in 2021. Average time to resolve reported hazards improved by 41% compared to 2021 (104 days vs. 175 days)¹ due to more effective communication and accountability via the new application.

Poles and manholes comprise the majority of reported hazards, and the time to resolve such reports can be lengthy. In the interim, our procedures seek to ensure that employees are made aware of the hazard, in order for them to take the proper precautions.

¹ Average resolution time for hazards is defined as the time between the hazard being reported and its resolution.

Our overall lost-work accident frequency rate in 2022 was 1.11², which is consistent year-over-year. Total reportable health and safety incidents also remained neutral. Bell continues to practice a series of operational measures including prevention plans (i.e. monthly observation & inspection), pre-job hazard assessments, wellness programs and ongoing safety communications.

While the health and safety of our team members is of the utmost importance at Bell, we regrettably experienced a workplace fatality in 2022 involving a Bell Technical Solutions Inc. (BTS) technician who fell from a ladder. Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is currently conducting an investigation, and the official cause has not yet been determined. Bell's objective is to minimize workplace accidents and avoid fatalities.

Confined spaces

Bell's confined space program includes extensive training for team members who perform work in confined spaces, both within our network infrastructure and our buildings. Anyone entering one of our confined spaces is informed of the hazard specific to that confined space, and of the specific procedures and/or equipment needed in order to perform their work safely. In 2022, we improved our process for the credential validation needed prior to granting access to a confined space, and we performed 18 emergency response and rescue drills across different regions in order to confirm the effectiveness of our processes and procedures.

² PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP has provided limited assurance. Please see PwC's assurance statement

Contractor safety

At Bell, we have a rigorous contractor safety management program, including our prequalification process for contractors and their subcontractors performing high-risk tasks. At year-end, Bell had more than 850 qualified contractors on our prequalification platform. Our program is also integrated into Bell's Vendor Risk Management program to validate that the required risk mitigation is in place upon contract negotiation. Hazard awareness and safety requirements are communicated to contractors via bulletins and integrated into our High Risk Guidelines. New guidelines for asbestos abatement have been finalized and are being implemented. Our internal incident reporting and investigation program extends to contractor incidents, helping reduce our response time and ensure that the proper stakeholders are notified and engaged in a timely manner following an incident. Our monitoring program continues to improve year-over-year through collaboration with business unit representatives and the onboarding of subsidiaries.

Electrical safety

Electrical safety is a critical component of Bell's H&S initiatives to ensure the well-being of our employees, contractors and the general public. Last year, major milestones were achieved with improvements to our Electrical Safety Program Standard. We enhanced our Lock-Out-Tag-Out program to ensure compliance with the CSA Z460: Control of Hazardous Energy Standard. To increase awareness of the electrical hazards in our workplace, we are focused on the continual improvement of our electrical training for both electrical and non-electrical workers, and on strengthening the content of all electrical training. We have also trialed and selected new technologies (for example, a wearable proximity sensor) in order to enhance awareness for employees working on or around electrical equipment. In addition, we are implementing a height awareness management system for our fleet of bucket trucks.

Ergonomics

In 2022, with the introduction of a new flexible work environment, one of our priorities was to introduce a new support structure available to all team members, regardless of their work location. Additional studies on manual handling tasks for our field workers were also undertaken in order to enhance mitigation measures that reduce the risk of injury when performing daily tasks.

Hazardous products

Training on the workplace hazardous material identification system and updating safety data sheets is mandatory for all team members and managers who are exposed to hazardous products in their daily activities. This training is the foundation of our hazardous products program. All new hazardous products must be approved. Safety data sheets are made available to employees through the corporate database.

Occupational hygiene

Bell's occupational hygiene program is dedicated to anticipating, recognizing, evaluating and controlling physical, chemical and biological hazards that may result in injury or illness, or may affect the well-being of our employees. In 2022, we improved our lead exposure management program with the launch of a new corporate directive and a task-specific respiratory protection program. We also strengthened our asbestos management program by completing asbestos inventories within our buildings, which to date represents 2,835 buildings spanning over 20,800,000 square feet. Additional asbestos awareness training was provided to technicians and facility managers working in our facilities.

Tools and equipment

As part of the corporate Tools and Equipment program, the H&S team monitors tools and equipment used within the company to ensure that they comply with Canadian regulations and standards. Every year, an inventory of all tools is performed within all business units, and hazards related to those tools and equipment are continually assessed and mitigated when required.

In 2022, we advanced our chainsaw portfolio by developing a directive that governs the scope of use, training, procurement and maintenance of chainsaws throughout the company. We also published a new directive on vegetation management that provides clear guidelines and training on safe work practices when encountering obstacles (such as tree branches and overgrown plants) during work on joint-use poles.

Transportation and road safety

Bell's Transportation & Road Safety Program covers different programs such as defensive driving, traffic control and aviation. These programs are continually improved through the review of procedures and internal policies. In 2022, we updated a few road safety training modules to ensure consistency across the company, and we finalized our guidelines for hiring traffic control contractors. Additionally, the company continued to enhance our aviation program by developing a passenger manifest that complemented existing controls such as vendor audits, passenger training and the use of flight hazard assessments.

Working at heights

We maintain rigorous training programs on the safe use and maintenance of equipment for all team members who perform work at heights, with an emphasis on fall arrest equipment, safe work and rescue practices. We continue to explore opportunities to reduce the risk of falling, and mitigate ergonomic hazards related to ladder handling and transportation, while continuing to meet regulatory and product safety requirements for our team members.

In 2022, we further enhanced our working at heights training portfolio to include more descriptive content relating to safety practices for working on our aerial network. This complements our existing program where refresher training, manager supervision, equipment inspections and practical ladder exercises are part of the annual deliverables.

To the extent this information sheet contains forward-looking statements including, without limitation, outlooks, plans, objectives, goals, targets, strategic priorities, commitments, undertakings and other statements that do not refer to historical facts, these statements are not guarantees of future performance or events, and we caution you against relying on any of these forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties and are based on assumptions that give rise to the possibility that actual results or events could differ materially from our expectations expressed in, or implied by, such forward-looking statements. Refer to BCE Inc.'s most recent annual management's discussion and analysis (MD&A), as updated in BCE Inc.'s subsequent quarterly MD&As, for further information on such risks, uncertainties and assumptions. BCE Inc.'s MD&As are available on its website at bce.ca, on SEDAR at sedar.com and on EDGAR at sec.gov.