

WorkSafeBC

Review Division

Statistical Overview – 4th Quarter 2019

The Review Division was created in 2002 as a result of amendments to the *Workers Compensation Act* ("Act") that made significant changes to the workers' compensation appeal process. These changes, which took effect on March 3, 2003, established two levels of review or appeal for most decisions made by the WorkSafeBC "Workers' Compensation Board" under the Act.

The first level is internal involving an independent review of a decision by a Review Officer in the Review Division and the second level is to the external but also independent Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal ("WCAT").

The Review Division's mission is to effectively process reviews and to reduce disputes leading to reviews and appeals by providing:

- Clients with an opportunity to present their case;
- Participants with opportunities to understand and resolve disagreements;
- Clear, fair and consistent decisions; and
- Information and feedback about decision-making to management as part of the overall strategy to improve the quality of decisions.

Purpose of this Report

This statistical overview report is issued at the end of each quarter. The report includes three sections:

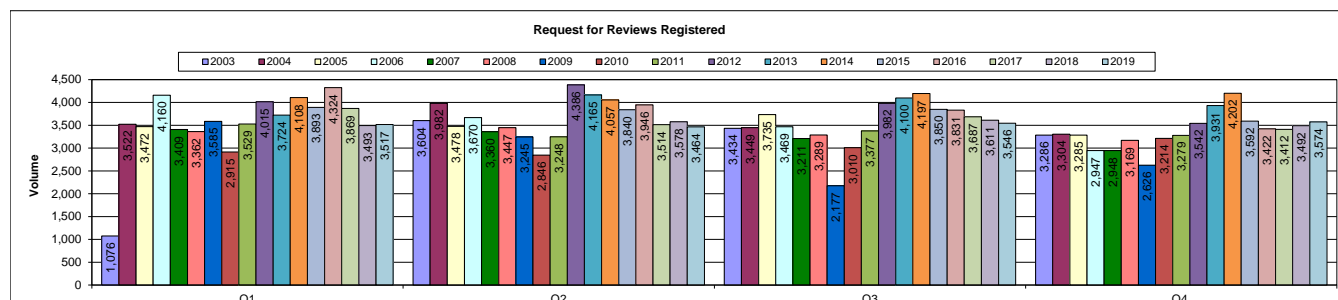
- A. Incoming Requests for Review – Information about the volume of requests for review received by the Review Division
- B. Completed Reviews – Information about the volume and outcome of completed reviews
- C. Completed Issues – Information about the volume and outcome of issues decided in completed reviews. A review may involve more than one issue.

This report is intended primarily for readers who are already familiar with the WorkSafeBC decision-making and the Review and Appeal processes. You may contact the Review Division directly by phone at: **604-214-5411**. Additional information about the Review Division can be found at:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/review-appeal>

A. Incoming Requests for Review

Reviews may be requested on decisions concerning Compensation, Prevention or Assessment matters. It is estimated that reviews are requested on only a very small percentage of decisions made by the Board each year.



* The review and appeals system change arising from Bill 63 did not fully come into effect until March 3, 2003.

Comments:

- Q4 2019 incoming volume increased 0.8% from the previous quarter and increased 2.3% from Q4 2018.
- 94.4% of Q4 2019's incoming volume concerned Compensation matters, while 2.2% related to Prevention matters and 3.4% related to Assessment matters.

1. Processing Status of Requests for Reviews

Status		Q3 2019	Q4 2019
Outstanding Balance Beginning of Period		3,937	3,884
Registered During Period		3,546	3,574
Reactivated Reviews*		14	8
Less:	Rejected	67	36
	Declined	179	181
	Discarded	122	110
	Abandoned	1	6
	Withdrawn	491	544
	Completed	2,753	2,507
Outstanding Balance end of Period		3,884	4,082

* Reviews that were initially rejected or declined and subsequently reactivated.

Comments:

- The "drop-off rate" of Requests for Review in Q4 2019 was 24.8%, a 0.3% increase over Q3 2019. The "drop off" is comprised as follows: 9.6% rejected/declined/discarded/ abandoned (the primary reasons for rejection are late filing, no underlying decision to review, and requests outside of Review Division jurisdiction) and 15.2% reviews withdrawn before the review was completed. The percent of reviews withdrawn increased 1.3% from the previous quarter while the rest of the "drop-offs" decreased 1.0% from the previous quarter.

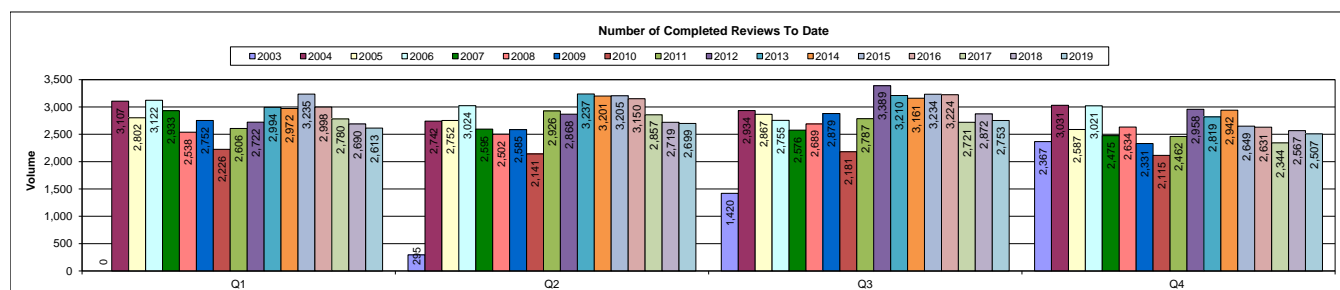
2. Decision on Applications for Extensions of Time to Apply for a Review

Decision	Q3 2019	% Q3 2019	Q4 2019	% Q4 2019
Allowed	113	50%	98	43%
Denied	112	50%	128	57%
Total	225	100%	226	100%

Comments:

- The number of "late review" requests (filed outside of the 90 days statutory deadline) in Q4 2019 was about the same as last quarter (226 vs 225 in Q3 2019).
- The percentage of "allowed" extension requests in Q4 2019 decreased 7% from Q3 2019 (43% from 50%).

B. Completed Reviews to Date

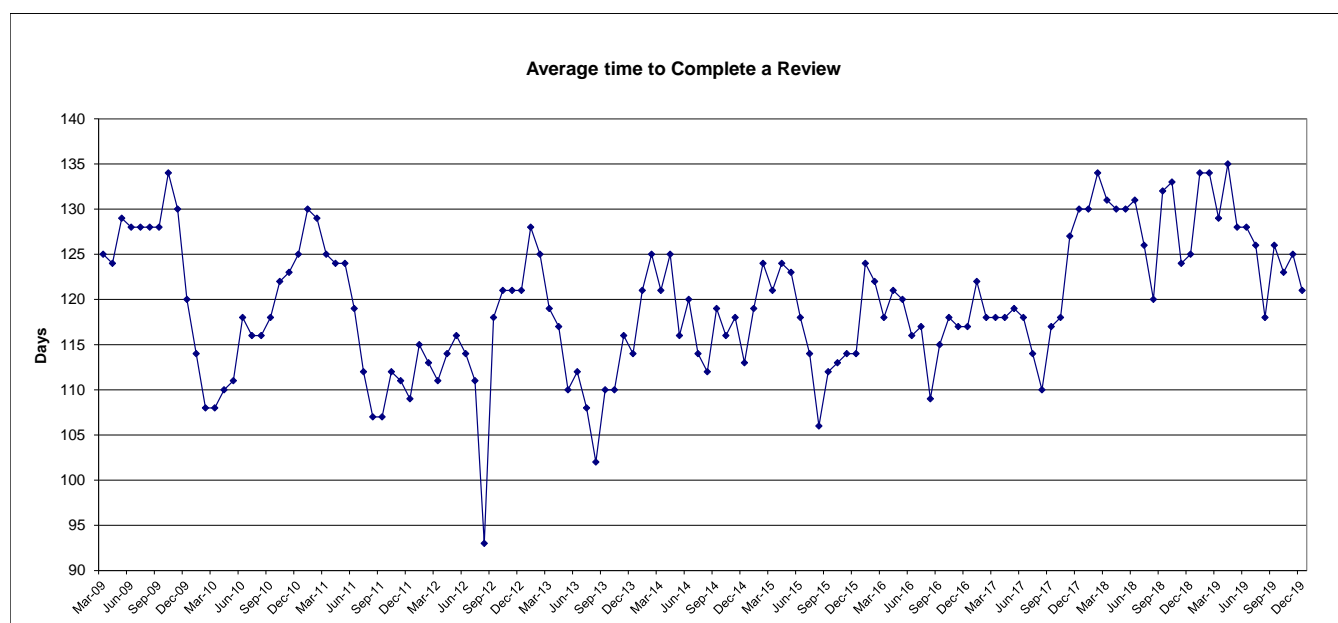


* The review and appeals system change arising from Bill 63 did not come fully into effect until March 3, 2003.

Comments:

- The number of completed reviews in Q4 2019 decreased 8.9% compared to Q3 2019 and decreased 2.3% from the number completed at the same time last year.

1. Average Time to Complete a Review



Comments:

- The average number of days to complete a review in Q4 2019 was 123 days (versus 123 days in Q3 2019).

2. Review Outcomes

Each Request for Review usually relates to a specific decision letter from one of the WorkSafeBC operating divisions. As shown in the table below, one of four possible outcomes was coded to each completed review:

Outcome for Completed Reviews*	Q3 2019	% of Q3 2019 Total	Q4 2019	% of Q4 2019 Total
Confirm	1,358	49%	1,180	47%
Cancel	15	1%	19	1%
Vary	893	32%	806	32%
Return to Board	487	18%	502	20%
Total	2,753	100%	2,507	100%

*See appendix for definitions.

C. Issue Outcomes

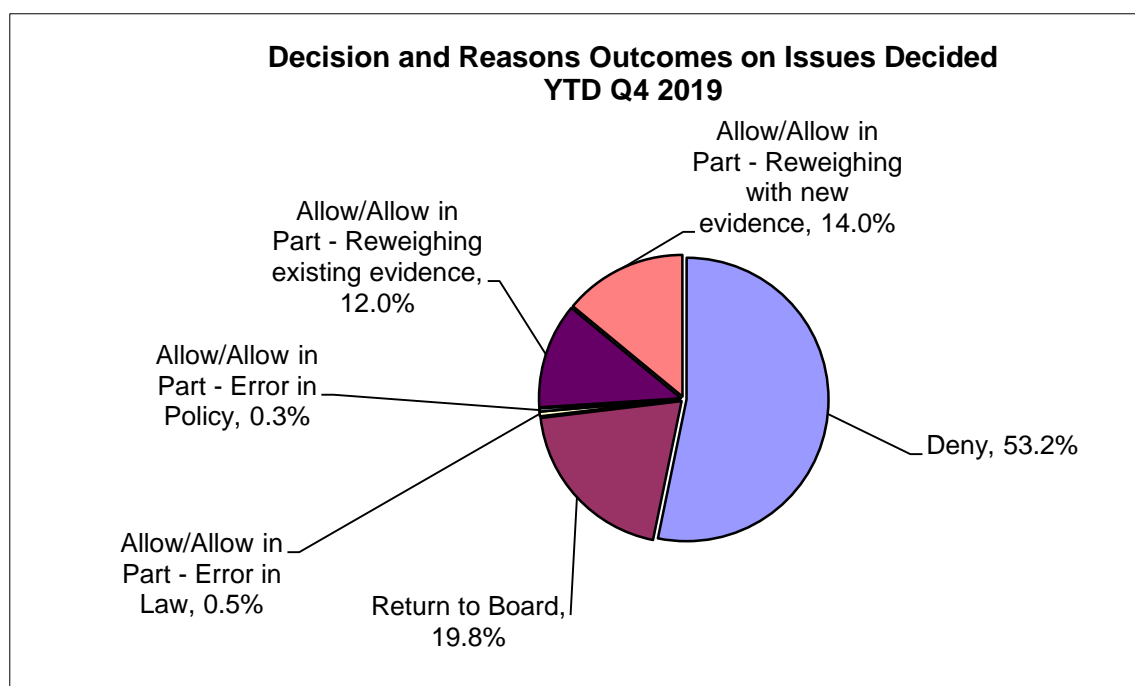
1. Overall Issue Outcomes

Within each decision letter reviewed, there will be one or more issues under review. The Review Division provides statistics on decisions concerning the overall reviews and on the issues under review. As shown in the table below, one of four possible outcomes is coded to each completed issue:

Outcome for Completed Issues*	Q3 2019	% of Q3 2019 Total	Q4 2019	% of Q4 2019 Total
Deny	1,828	54%	1,610	51%
Allow	838	25%	747	24%
Allow in Part	80	2%	88	3%
Return to Board	663	19%	688	22%
Total	3,409	100%	3,133	100%

*See appendix for definitions.

2. Outcome and Reasons for Issues Decided Year to Date



3. Top 10 Issues under Review

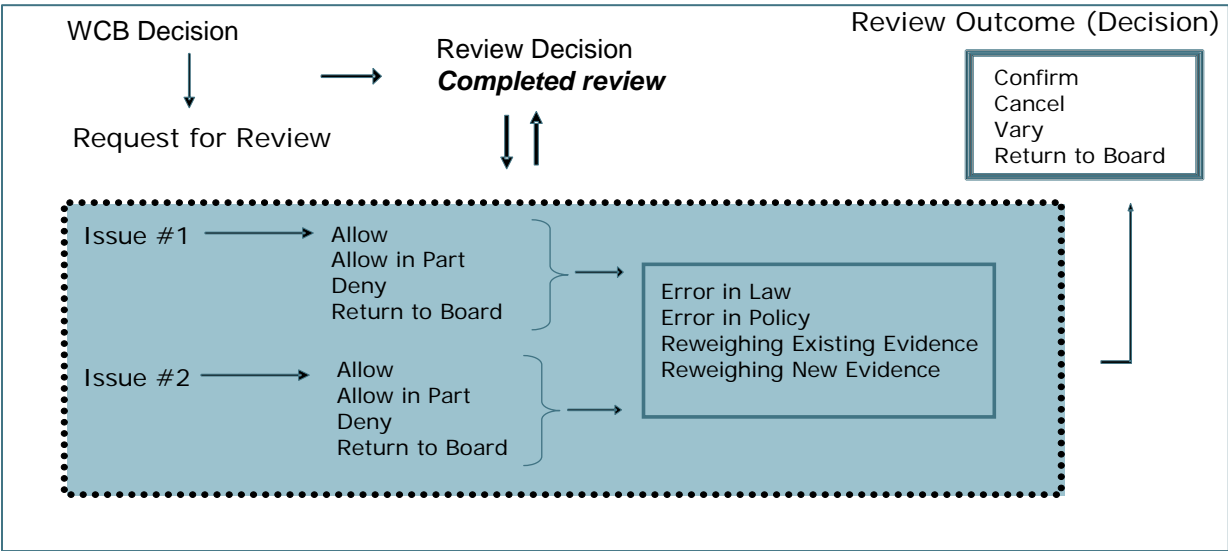
Issue Group	# of Issues YTD Q4 2019	% of YTD Q4 2019 Total
Sec. 5 - Comp. for Personal Injury	3,049	23.0%
Sec. 23 - Permanent Partial Disability	1,840	13.9%
Sec. 30 - Temporary Partial Disability	1,337	10.1%
Sec. 39 - Relief of Costs	1073	8.1%
Sec. 16 - Vocational Rehabilitation	747	5.6%
Sec. 96 - Jurisdiction of the Board	671	5.1%
Sec. 21 - Health Care	652	4.9%
Sec. 6 - Occupational Disease	650	4.9%
Sec. 29 & 30 – Wage Loss Entitlement	505	3.8%
Sec. 29 - Temporary Total Disability	453	3.4%
Other	2,278	17.2%
TOTAL	13,255	100.0%

Comments:

- Issues are summarized in issue groups which cover a specific topic or area of decision-making.
- 95.2% of review requests completed YTD Q4 2019 concern claim-related matters.
- The most frequently coded issue this year is Section 5 - Compensation for Personal Injury, followed by Section 23 – Permanent Partial Disability.

D. Appendix

1. Linkage of Decisions, Reviews and Issues



2. Definition of Terms

The Review Division of the Workers' Compensation Board ("Board") has authority under sections 96.2 to 96.5 of the *Workers Compensation Act* ("Act") to review decisions in specific cases made by officers in the Board's Compensation Services, Finance (Assessment decisions), and Prevention Divisions.

Pursuant to Section 96.2(3) of the *Act*, a Request for Review of compensation and assessment decisions must be filed within 90 days from the date when the Board decision. Requests for review of health and safety enforcement decisions must be filed within 45 days after the decision. Board decisions are normally communicated in a letter or other document that includes an explanation of the reasons for the decision. This letter or document should be submitted with the Request for Review form when initiating a review of the decision to the Review Division.

With each decision letter, one or more issues may be identified and each of these issues may be reviewed. Upon review, Review Officers will determine an outcome for each of the issues. Outcomes of issues may be one of the following four types:

Allow	The Review Officer disagrees with the determination made on an issue covered by a decision or order under review.
Allow in Part	The Review Officer disagrees in part with the determination made on an issue covered by a decision or order under review.
Deny	The Review Officer agrees with the determination made on an issue covered by a decision or order under review.
Return to Board	A referral of a decision or order back to the Compensation Services, Finance or Prevention Division of the Board so that the Division may make a further determination on one or more issues.

For each issue with the outcome of allow or allow in part, a reason must be provided for why. Reasons provided can be one or more of the following:

Error in law	The decision was inconsistent with the <i>Act</i> , a regulation under the <i>Act</i> , or some other law or regulation.
Error in policy	The decision was inconsistent with the published policy of the Board.
Reweighing existing evidence	The decision was changed because the Review Officer reached a different conclusion on the same evidence that was before the initial decision maker.
Reweighing with new evidence	The decision was changed because the Review Officer reached a different conclusion as a result of significant new evidence that was not before the initial decision maker.

Although each review may deal with one or more issues, an outcome for the whole review must be stated using the terms set out in Section 96.4(8)(a) of the *Act*. Outcomes on each review may be one of the following:

Confirm	The Review Officer agrees with the determinations made on every issue covered by a decision or order under review, though not necessarily with the reasons for those determinations.
Cancel	The Review Officer disagrees with the determinations made on every issue covered by a decision or order under review and determines that the decision should be withdrawn without a new decision being substituted.
Return to Board	A referral of a decision or order back to the Compensation Services, Finance or Prevention Division of the Board so that the Division may make a further determination on one or more issues.
Vary	Any decision by a Review Officer other than one that confirms or cancels a decision or order. This covers situations where the Review Officer (a) agrees with the determination made on one or more, but not all, the issues covered by a decision or order under review, or (b) disagrees with the determinations on all issues, and decides to substitute a new decision or order.