

**Federal Safety  
Commissioner  
2020**

**WHS Accreditation  
Scheme Data Report**



**Australian Government**

**Attorney-General's Department**  
Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner

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# I. SCHEME REQUIREMENTS

## Auditing

The Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner (OFSC) acts to improve workplace health and safety (WHS) practices on building and construction sites across Australia. We do this through the administration of the Australian Government Work Health and Safety Accreditation Scheme (the Scheme) and by promoting safety across the industry. Once accredited under the Scheme, companies are subject to ongoing audits to assess compliance against their conditions of accreditation and the Scheme audit criteria. For detailed information on this please see the FSC Audit Criteria Guidelines.

## Reporting

A condition of accreditation is that accredited companies comply with the reporting requirements of the Scheme. Accredited companies are required to provide information to the OFSC on their WHS performance. The OFSC requires information from accredited companies at different stages throughout the life of both Scheme and non-Scheme building contracts on which they are the head contractor.

Reporting on WHS performance enables the OFSC to assess the impact of the Scheme on industry safety, the ongoing suitability of companies to remain accredited under the Scheme, and to determine WHS trends and benchmarks. This in turn will allow the OFSC to provide relevant, useful best practice advice to aid in the improvement of WHS awareness and culture in the building and construction industry.

## Annual Census

The OFSC conducts a voluntary, anonymous census on Scheme accredited companies every year. The most recent census had the highest response rate yet with two-thirds of accredited companies responding.

Key findings from the census are represented throughout this report.

## II. SCHEME OVERVIEW

The Scheme continued to grow in 2020, reaching over 500 accredited companies across 400 accreditations.

Accredited companies continue to be a significant part of the Australian building and construction industry, with around \$67 billion Scheme projects active throughout 2020, part of a total of \$147 billion Scheme projects since the Scheme started.

There are 31 Scheme accredited Indigenous owned companies (50% or more ownership). This almost doubles the number of accredited Indigenous companies over the previous 12-months.

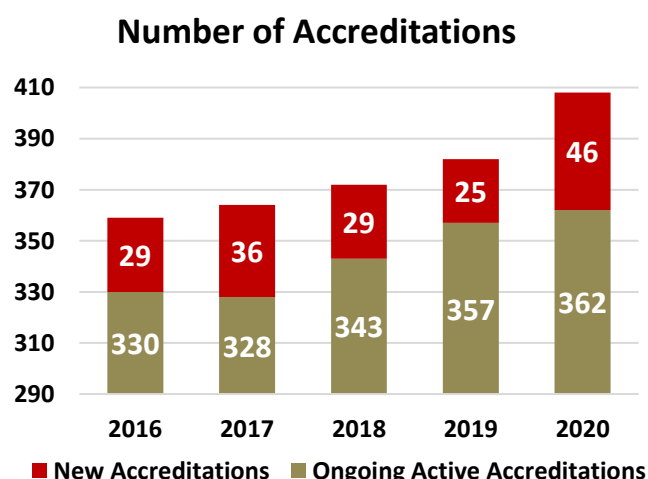
Small to medium construction companies, and regional construction companies are an important part of the Scheme. Three quarters of Scheme accredited companies are classified as small or medium in size, showing that the size of a company is no barrier to entry for achieving best practice safety.

### The 2020 Annual Census found...

- 95% of companies agree that the OFSC has improved industry safety.
- 80% of all respondents state that the Scheme has improved their safety practices and their safety culture.
- 87% of all respondents agree that FSC accreditation is value for money.

## ACCREDITATIONS

In 2020 the Federal Safety Commissioner approved **46** new accreditations. There has been an annual average of **33** new accreditations over the past 5 years. At the end of 2020 there were **408** active Scheme accreditations.



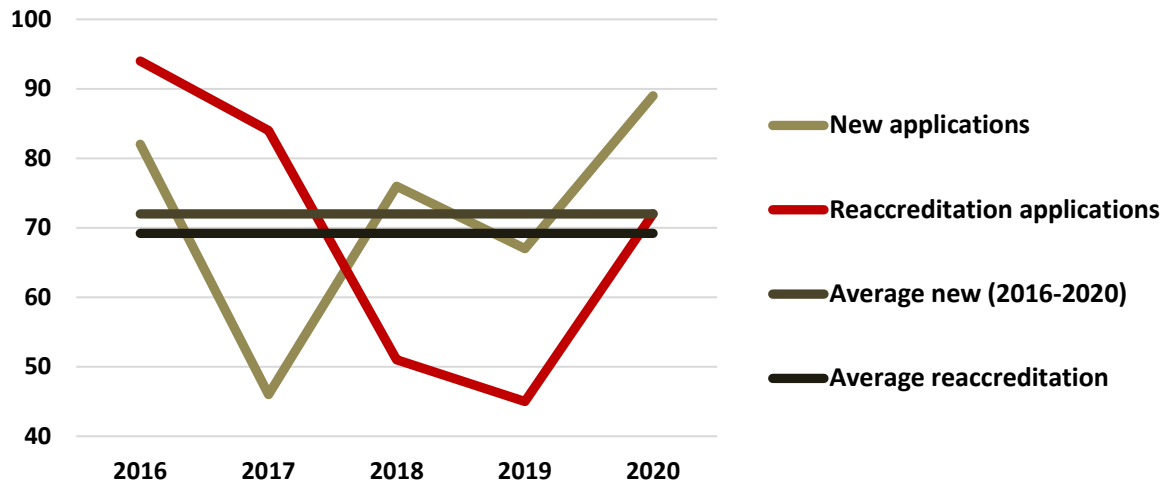
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Accreditations	359	364	372	382	<b>408</b>

- The number of active Scheme accreditations at the end of each year combines new accreditations, reaccreditations, and subtracts those accreditations which have expired or been withdrawn or suspended.
- Joint accreditations account for **18%** of all accreditations. A joint accreditation represents two or more companies operating with the same Scheme accredited WHS Management System. Due to this, the **408** accreditations represent **542** Scheme accredited construction companies.
- On-site audits and WHS reporting are managed by accreditation. Therefore all OFSC data occurs at the accreditation level, and is analysed in this report as such.

## APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION

The OFSC received **89** new applications for Scheme accreditation in 2020. Over the past 5 years, an annual average of **72** new applications were received. **72** reaccreditation applications were processed in 2020. Over the past 5 years, an annual average of **69** reaccreditations have been processed.

### Applications for Accreditation and Reaccreditation

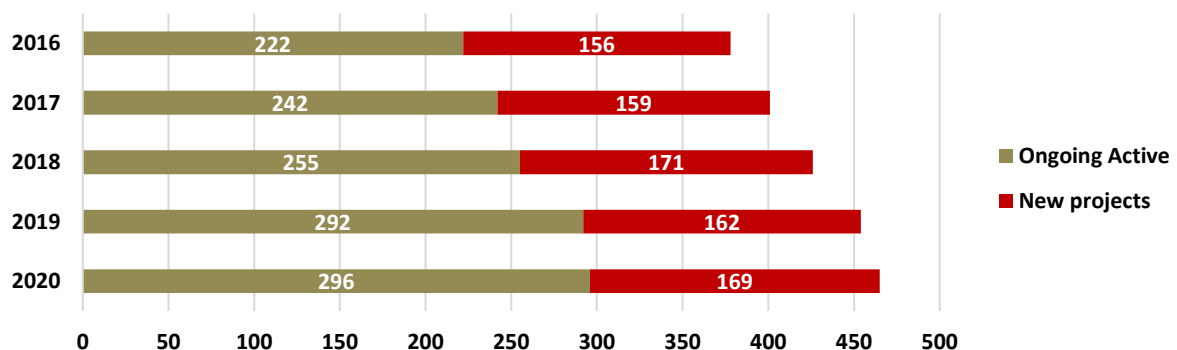


	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Avg
New Accreditation Applications	82	46	76	67	<b>89</b>	<b>72</b>
Re-accreditation Applications	94	84	51	45	<b>72</b>	<b>69.2</b>

## ACTIVE SCHEME PROJECTS

In 2020, work began on **169** new Scheme projects by accredited companies, with **465** projects active at some point during the year. The five year average of new Scheme projects started is **163** each year. The 465 scheme projects active in 2020 have a combined value of **\$67.77** billion.

### Active Scheme Projects

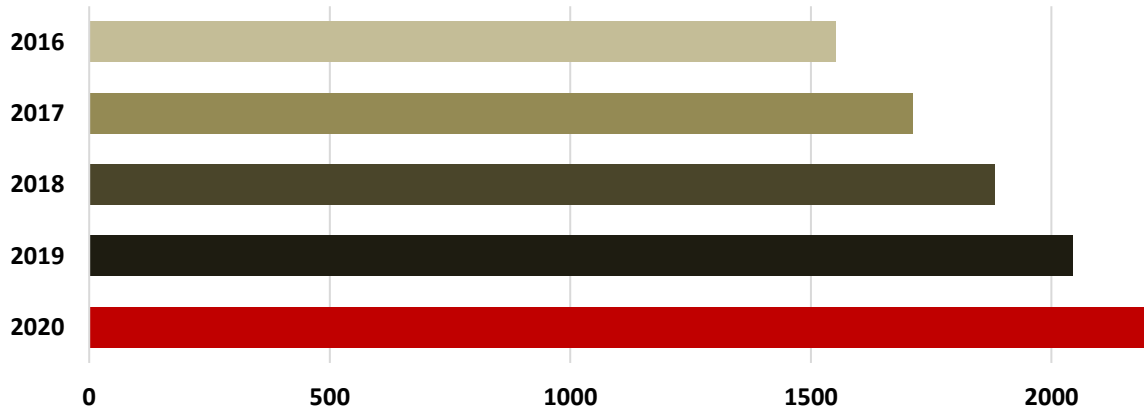


	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Avg
Active Scheme Projects	378	401	426	4544	<b>465</b>	425

## TOTAL SCHEME PROJECTS

Accredited companies have built **2,213** projects since the Scheme began in 2006, valued at over **\$147 billion**.

**Total Scheme Projects**



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total Scheme Projects</b>	1,552	1,711	1,882	2,044	<b>2,213</b>
<b>Value (Billions)</b>	\$94.1	\$106.2	\$119.8	\$133.4	<b>\$147.7</b>

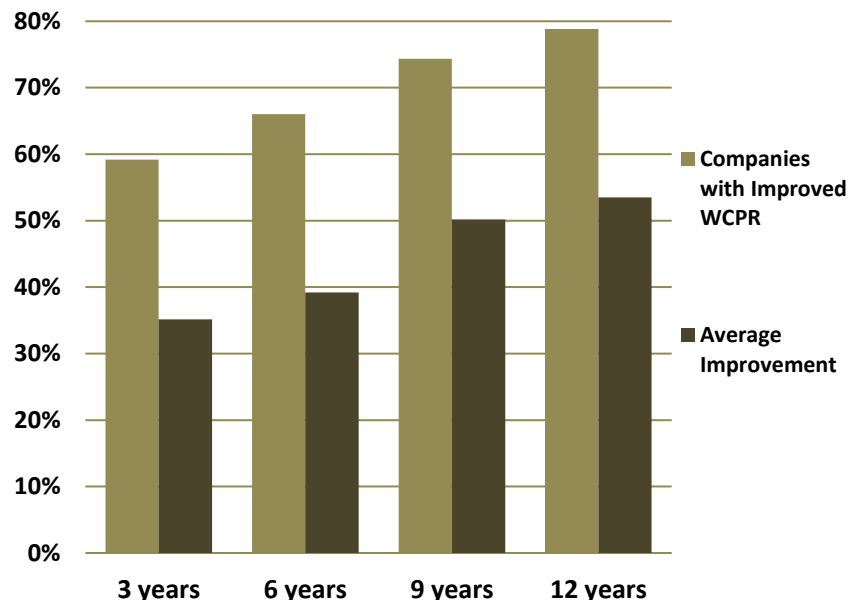
## WORKERS' COMPENSATION PREMIUM RATES

Scheme accredited companies have lower workers' compensation premium rates (WCPR) over time.

After 3 years, **59%** of companies reduce their WCPR by an average of **35%**. After 6 years this has increased to **67%** of companies having reduced their WCPR by an average of **39%**.

This WCPR reduction increases again after 12 years of accreditation, with **79%** of companies reducing their WCPR by an average of **54%**.

**Accredited Companies' WCPR Improvement Over Years Accredited**



	Years Accredited under the Scheme			
	3 years	6 years	9 years	12 years
<b>Accredited Companies with Improved WCPR</b>	59%	66%	74%	79%
<b>Average Improvement to WCPR</b>	35%	39%	50%	54%

### III. AUDITS & COMPLIANCE

Scheme accredited companies undergo regular onsite safety audits as a requirement of accreditation. These audits are conducted by Federal Safety Officers (FSOs). Company audit performance informs the OFSC risk management approach, which guides the frequency and focus of future audits. Outside of the regular audit schedule, additional audits may be conducted following serious incidents.

In 2020, the OFSC conducted over 400 on-site audits. Nearly 4,000 corrective action reports (CARs) were issued, with almost a 50/50 split between Major and Minor CARs (see Glossary on page 16 for definition). The highest occurring issues related to mobile plant, emergency response planning, and hazard identification.

From 2016 to 2020, companies had an average of 2.5 audits to gain their first accreditation, which takes an average of nine months from application submission to FSC sign-off.

#### The 2021 Annual Census found...

The OFSC's annual census of accredited companies in 2020 identified that 95% of respondents agreed FSOs had been professional, 96% agreed that they were knowledgeable and 89% agreed that FSOs were collaborative.

At the conclusion of each audit, companies are also provided with an evaluation form seeking feedback on FSO performance. The response rate for this form is approximately 18%. The majority of companies agree that the OFSC and FSOs are performing their roles appropriately, with a performance score of 4.6 out of 5 on average.

### AUDITS & CORRECTIVE ACTION REPORTS

The OFSC conducted **404** on-site safety audits in 2020. During these audits, **3,861** CARs were issued; 48.6% were Major CARs (1,878), and 51.4% were Minor CARs (1,983).

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Audits</b>	435	428	438	428	<b>404</b>

Highest Issued CARs by Audit Head Criteria		CARs Issued	Percentage of all CARs issued
<b>H16</b>	Mobile Plant	<b>554</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>WH13</b>	Emergency Preparedness and Response	<b>441</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>WH12</b>	Hazard Identification Risk Assessment and Control (HIRAC)	<b>348</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>FP4</b>	Management of Subcontractor WHS	<b>302</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>WH14</b>	Health Surveillance and Exposure Monitoring	<b>251</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>FP1</b>	Senior Management Commitment	<b>216</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>H7</b>	Excavation	<b>179</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>H1</b>	Working at heights	<b>177</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>H12</b>	Electrical	<b>167</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>WH15</b>	Incident Investigation and Corrective Action	<b>161</b>	<b>4%</b>

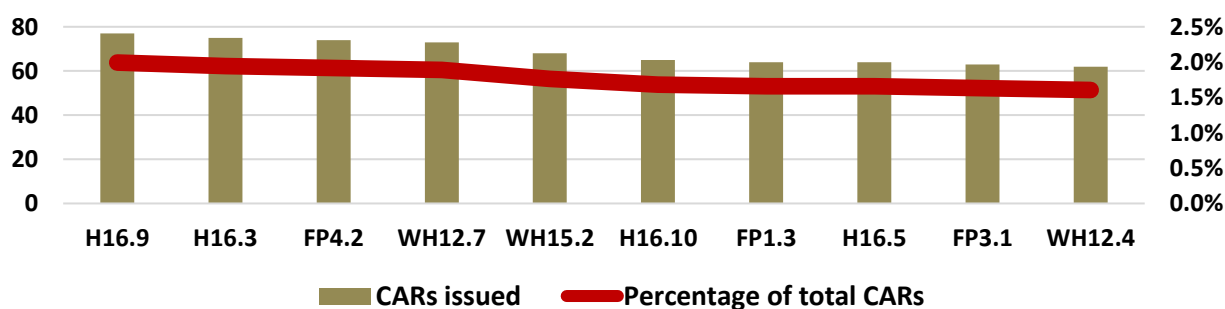
In 2020, **14%** of all CARs issued fell under the audit head criteria of mobile plant. Emergency preparedness and response was the second most issued head criteria at **11%**.

## CAR Sub-criteria by Amount Issued

The most issued audit sub-criteria in 2020 were **H16.9** and **H16.3**, both under the mobile plant head criteria. See table below.

Ten Audit Sub-Criteria Most Issued with CARs		CARs Issued	Percentage of all CARs issued
<b>H16.9</b>	The system ensures there is an inspection program that is specific to the needs of the type of mobile plant, taking into account regulatory inspections and registration; manufacturers' inspection requirements; pre-start inspections; and	<b>77</b>	<b>1.99%</b>
<b>H16.3</b>	Safe systems of work are established for the operation of mobile plant taking into account the operator manual; outcomes from the plant risk assessment; site specific requirements; and the need for ROPS and FOPS.	<b>75</b>	<b>1.94%</b>
<b>FP4.2</b>	There is a documented process to ensure HIRAC is applied in subcontractor selection/procurement.	<b>74</b>	<b>1.91%</b>
<b>WH12.7</b>	There is a documented process to evaluate the effectiveness of company, project and task specific HIRAC processes.	<b>73</b>	<b>1.89%</b>
<b>WH15.2</b>	There is a documented process to ensure all health and safety incidents are reported, recorded and investigated as defined by the company's system, with external notification completed where required.	<b>68</b>	<b>1.76%</b>
<b>H16.10</b>	The system ensures that there is a process for the ongoing maintenance of mobile plant.	<b>65</b>	<b>1.68%</b>
<b>FP1.3</b>	There is a documented process to ensure senior managers, site managers and supervisors are trained in WHS obligations/due diligence, and the company's WHS management system requirements relevant to their role.	<b>64</b>	<b>1.65%</b>
<b>H16.5</b>	Safe systems of work have been developed for the use of mobile cranes taking into account ground conditions; development of lift plans in accordance with relevant legislation, codes of practice and Australian standards; and lifting of materials and workers.	<b>64</b>	<b>1.65%</b>
<b>FP3.1</b>	There is a documented process for the establishment of WHS consultation, cooperation and coordination arrangements, including: agreement on the establishment of consultation arrangements with workers on site; consultation with workers or their representatives when WHS issues arise; a program to ensure regular meetings with minutes of the meetings available to all workers; and training for health and safety representatives/WHS committee members where requested/required.	<b>63</b>	<b>1.63%</b>
<b>WH12.4</b>	There is a documented process to liaise with client/public/other entities to implement a HIRAC process for any hazards impacting any of the parties.	<b>62</b>	<b>1.60%</b>

**Ten Audit Sub-Criteria Most Issued with CARs 2020**



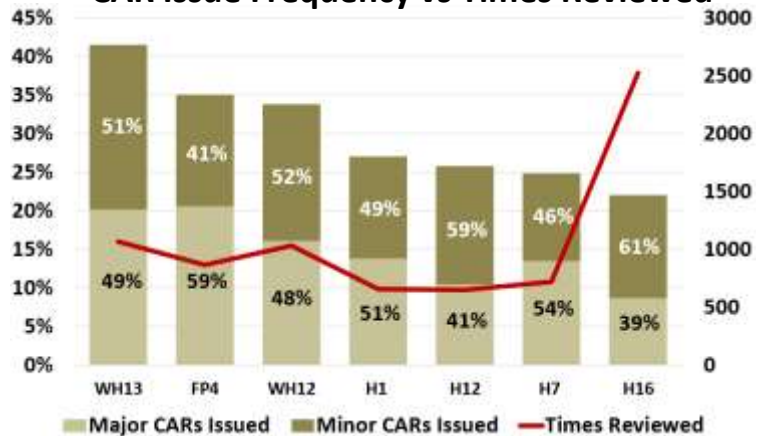


## CORRECTIVE ACTION REPORTS FREQUENCY 2020

In 2020, **12,332** audit head-criteria were reviewed by FSOs. Only seven of these head-criteria were reviewed more than 5% of the time.

Of those seven audit head-criteria, WH13 – Emergency Preparedness and Response was found non-compliant at the highest rate, being issued a CAR **41.5%** of the times it was reviewed.

### CAR Issue Frequency vs Times Reviewed

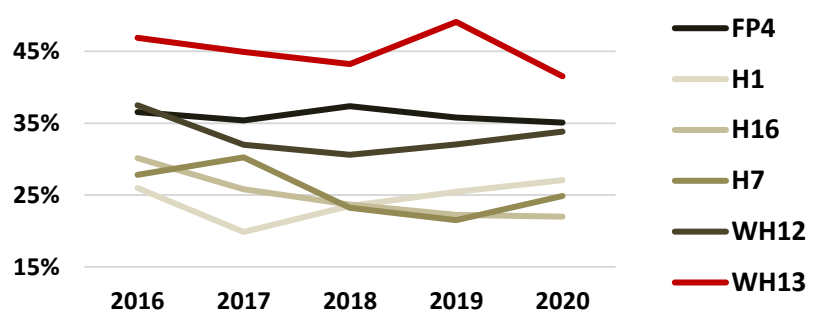


Audit Criteria	CARs Issued			Times Reviewed	% of Criteria reviewed	% CAR issued of Times Reviewed
	Major	Minor	Total			
WH13 - Emergency Preparedness and Response	214	227	441	1062	8.6%	41.5%
FP4 - Management of Subcontractor WHS	177	125	302	861	7.0%	35.1%
WH12 - Hazard Identification Risk Assessment and Control (HIRAC)	166	182	348	1029	8.3%	33.8%
H1 - Working at Heights	90	87	177	654	5.3%	27.1%
H12- Electrical	68	99	167	648	5.3%	25.8%
H7 - Excavation	97	82	179	720	5.8%	24.9%
H16- Mobile Plant and Equipment	218	336	554	2520	20.4%	22.0%

## CORRECTIVE ACTION REPORTS FREQUENCY OVER TIME

Over the past 5 years, the prevalence of CARs issued in these categories has remained fairly similar, and the ordered ranking of the categories has only slightly changed each year.

### CAR Issue Frequency 2016-2020



Audit Criteria	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
WH13 - Emergency Preparedness and Response	47%	45%	43%	49%	42%
FP4 - Management of Subcontractor WHS	37%	35%	37%	36%	35%
WH12 - Hazard Identification Risk Assessment and Control (HIRAC)	37%	32%	31%	32%	34%
H1 - Working at Heights	26%	20%	24%	25%	27%
H7 - Excavation	28%	30%	23%	22%	25%
H16 - Mobile Plant	30%	26%	24%	22%	22%

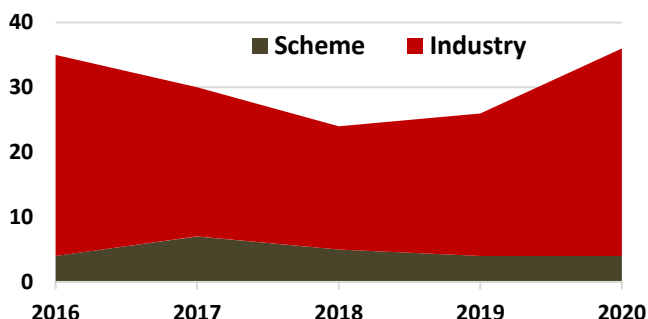
# IV. INCIDENT REPORTING ANALYSIS

## FATALITIES

In 2020, 4 fatal incidents were reported on Scheme accredited building sites.

Scheme accredited companies represent **30-40%** of annual construction industry turnover, yet accounted for an average of **16%** of workplace fatalities from 2016-2020.

Scheme fatalities as a sub-section of the building and construction industry



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Scheme Fatalities</b>	4	7	5	4	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Industry Fatalities*</b>	35	30	24	26	<b>36</b>

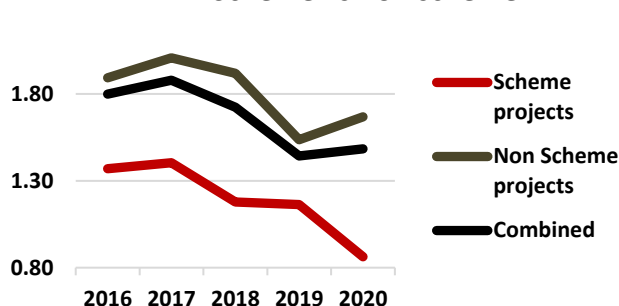
Industry fatality data is taken from Safe Work Australia’s (SWA) *Work-Related Traumatic Injury Fatalities* Report over multiple years. The report is available on the SWA website.

## INJURY FREQUENCY RATES – LTIFR

The lost time injury frequency rate (LTIFR) for Scheme accredited companies in 2020 was **1.48**, which is a slight increase from **1.44** in 2019, but a substantial decrease from **1.80** in 2016.

2020 LTIFR on Scheme projects fell from 2019; **1.16** down to **0.86**. The Non-Scheme project LTIFR rose substantially, from **1.54** to **1.67**, driving the increase in combined LTIFR.

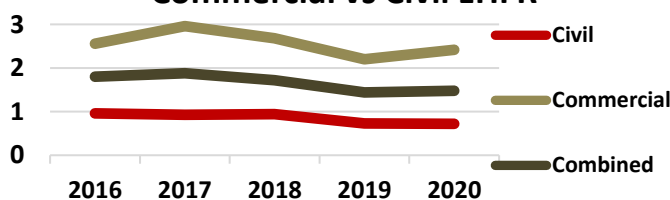
LTIFR - Scheme vs non scheme



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Scheme Projects</b>	1.37	1.40	1.18	1.16	<b>0.86</b>
<b>Non-Scheme Projects</b>	1.89	2.01	1.92	1.54	<b>1.67</b>
<b>Combined</b>	1.80	1.88	1.72	1.44	<b>1.48</b>

Over the past 5 years, lost time injuries reported by Scheme accredited companies have consistently occurred on commercial construction projects at approximately three times the rate of civil construction projects.

Commercial vs Civil LTIFR



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Civil Construction</b>	0.96	0.93	0.94	0.73	<b>0.72</b>
<b>Commercial Construction</b>	2.56	2.96	2.68	2.20	<b>2.39</b>
<b>Combined</b>	1.80	1.88	1.72	1.44	<b>1.48</b>

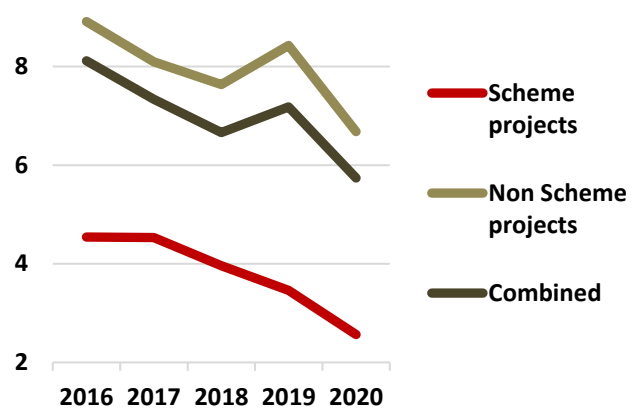
## INJURY FREQUENCY RATES – MTIFR

The medically treated injury frequency rate (MTIFR) for Scheme companies in 2020 was **5.74**. Scheme MTIFR has consistently fallen over the past 5 years.

Non-scheme MTIFR rose from 2018 to 2019, but dropped to its lowest level in 2020. Over the past five years it has dropped substantially from **8.91** to **6.68**.

The higher number of non-scheme hours causes the combined MTIFR to be similar to the non-scheme MTIFR.

### MTIFR- Scheme vs Non-Scheme

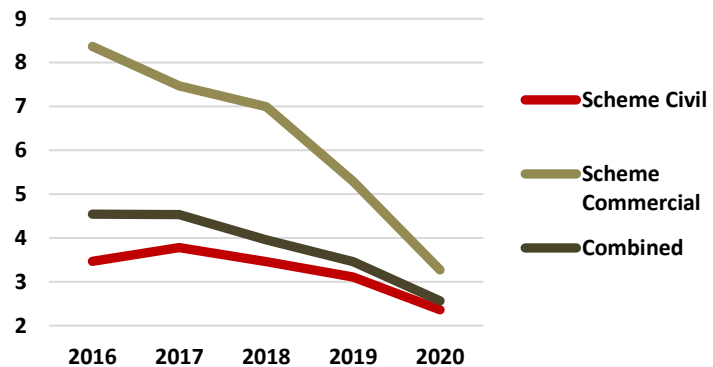


	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Scheme Projects</b>	4.54	4.53	3.96	3.46	<b>2.57</b>
<b>Non-scheme Projects</b>	8.91	8.10	7.63	8.42	<b>6.68</b>
<b>Combined</b>	8.12	7.34	6.66	7.18	<b>5.74</b>

### Scheme MTIs- Commercial vs Civil

Both the civil and commercial Scheme project MTIFR have dropped between 2017 and 2020.

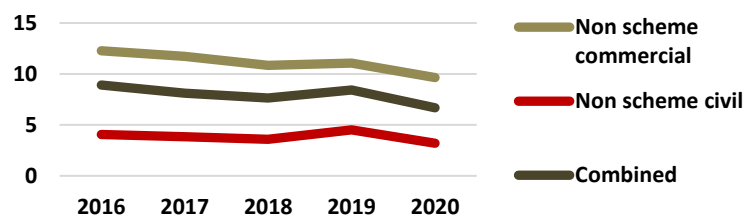
The combined Scheme MTIFR is much closer to the civil construction MTIFR due to the larger volume of civil Scheme projects.



<b>Scheme projects</b>	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Civil Construction</b>	3.46	3.78	3.46	3.11	<b>2.36</b>
<b>Commercial Construction</b>	8.37	7.46	6.99	5.29	<b>3.27</b>
<b>Combined</b>	4.54	4.53	3.96	3.46	<b>2.57</b>

There has been a significant decrease from 2016 to 2020 in both commercial and civil Non-Scheme project MTIs, both reaching their lowest levels in the past five years in 2020.

### Non-Scheme MTIs - Commercial vs Civil



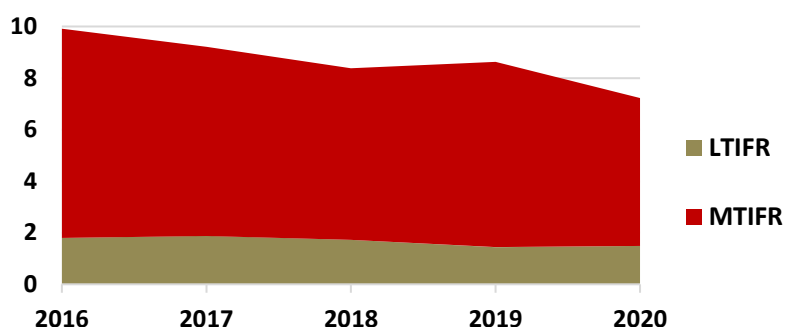
<b>Non-Scheme projects</b>	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Civil Construction</b>	4.06	3.84	3.57	4.51	<b>3.20</b>
<b>Commercial Construction</b>	12.27	11.73	10.85	11.08	<b>9.64</b>
<b>Combined</b>	8.91	8.10	7.63	8.42	<b>6.68</b>

## INJURY FREQUENCY RATES – TRIFR

The total recorded injury frequency rate (TRIFR) for Scheme companies is calculated by combining LTIFR and MTIFR.

From 2016-2020 the TRIFR has trended substantially lower.

TRIFR Split: LTIFR and MTIFR



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
LTIFR	1.80	1.88	1.72	1.44	1.48
MTIFR	8.12	7.34	6.66	7.18	5.74
TRIFR	9.93	9.24	8.40	8.63	7.23

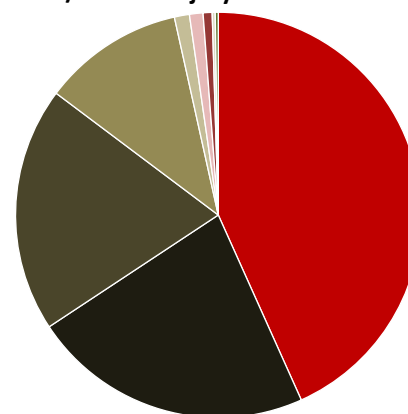
## NATURE OF INJURY

Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage represent just under half of the injuries reported in 2020.

Traumatic joint/ ligament and muscle/ tendon injury, and fractures both represent approximately 20% each.

### Nature of Injury 2020

- Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage
- Traumatic joint/ ligament and muscle/ tendon injury
- Fractures
- Other injuries
- Intracranial injuries
- Other diseases and claims
- Burns
- Injury to nerves and spinal cord
- Diseases and conditions

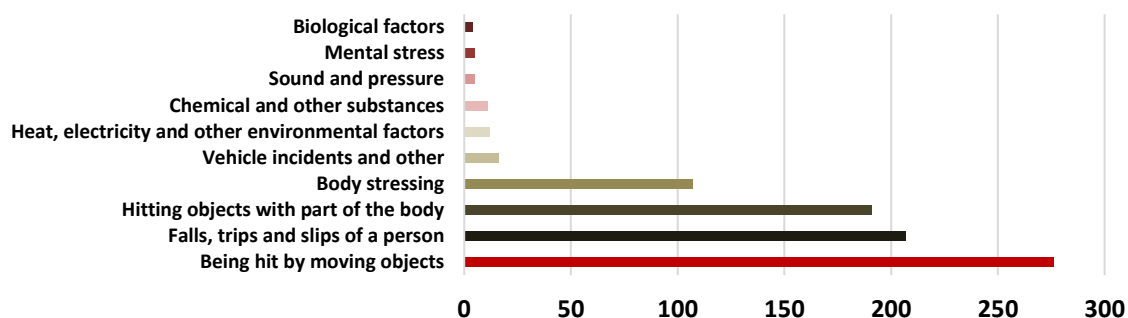


Nature of Injury	Occurrences	%
Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage	361	43.3%
Traumatic joint/ ligament and muscle/ tendon injury	187	22.4%
Fractures	163	19.5%
Other injuries	94	11.3%
Intracranial injuries	10	1.2%
Other diseases and claims	9	1.1%
Burns	6	0.7%
Diseases and conditions	2	0.2%
Injury to nerves and spinal cord	2	0.2%

## MECHANISM OF INJURY

One third of injuries on Scheme accredited projects in 2020 involved workers *being hit by moving objects*. *Falls, trips and slips, hitting objects with part of the body*, and *body stressing* make up the majority of other injuries.

### Mechanism of Injury

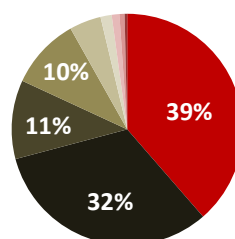


Mechanism of Injury	Occurrences	%
Being hit by moving objects	276	33.1%
Falls, trips and slips of a person	207	24.8%
Hitting objects with part of the body	191	22.9%
Body stressing	107	12.8%
Vehicle incidents and other	16	1.9%
Heat, electricity and other environmental factors	12	1.4%
Chemical and other substances	11	1.3%
Sound and pressure	5	0.6%
Mental stress	5	0.6%
Biological factors	4	0.5%

## LOCATION OF INJURY

Almost three quarters of injuries reported to the OFSC in 2020 occurred to the upper or lower limbs.

### Location of Injury - 2020



- Upper limbs
- Lower limbs
- Head
- Trunk
- Multiple locations
- Neck
- Unspecified locations
- Non-physical location
- Systemic location

Location of Injury	Occurrences	%
Upper limbs	322	38.6%
Lower limbs	269	32.2%
Head	92	11.0%
Trunk	83	10.0%
Multiple locations	37	4.4%
Neck	13	1.6%
Unspecified locations	9	1.1%
Non-physical location	6	0.7%
Systemic location	3	0.4%

# GLOSSARY

**Dangerous occurrence** - An incident where no person is injured, but could have been injured, resulting in serious personal injury, incapacity or death. Also commonly called a “near miss”.

**Frequency rate** - Frequency rates are calculated by the number of incidents divided by hours worked, multiplied by 1,000,000.

- **LTIFR** (Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate) - The number of occurrences of lost time injury that result in a permanent disability or time lost from work of one day shift or more in the period.
- **MTIFR** (Medically Treated Injury Frequency Rate) - The number of occurrences of treatment by, or under the order of, a qualified medical practitioner, or any injury that could be considered as being one that would normally be treated by a medical practitioner.
- **TRIFR** (Total Recorded Injury Frequency Rate) – The total number of Medically Treated Injuries, Lost Time Injuries and Fatalities. Fatalities are excluded from the calculation as they have a negligible effect on the frequency rates.

**Incident** - An incident resulting in an injury that is required to be notified by the WHS legislative requirement for notifiable incidents in the jurisdiction in which the project is being undertaken.

## Mechanism of incident classification

0. Falls, trips and slips of a person
1. Hitting objects with a part of the body
2. Being hit by moving objects
3. Sound and pressure
4. Body stressing
5. Heat, electricity and other environmental factors
6. Chemicals and other substances
7. Biological factors
8. Mental stress
9. Vehicle incidents and other

## Nature of injury classification

- A. Intracranial injuries
- B. Fractures
- C. Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage
- D. Burns
- E. Injury to nerves and spinal cord
- F. Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury
- G. Other injuries
- H. Diseases and conditions

## Corrective Action Reports – Major and Minor

A Corrective Action Report (CAR) is a formal finding made by Federal Safety Officers (FSOs) during the auditing process to identify where companies need to take further action. An FSO raises a CAR when they determine that a certain aspect of the system being audited does not conform to the OFSC audit criteria. This assessment is based on their review of documentary evidence and observation of onsite activities. There are two levels of CARs that can be raised as a result of OFSC audits, major and minor non-conformances:

- A **major non-conformance** is where there is the absence of a documented process, and/or the absence of implementation of a process where the opportunity for implementation has occurred in relation to a specific criterion.
- A **minor non-conformance** is where there is a partially documented and implemented process where the opportunity for implementation has occurred in relation to a specific criterion.