Preventing Worker Injuries and Deaths From Moving Refuse Collection Vehicles

Public Employee Alert #13
Safety Bulletin
ATTENTION: All Public Employers
March 1, 2001

This notice is being sent as a result of the increase in accidents and fatalities involving refuse collection employees.

Please Ensure that this Warning and the Safe Practices below are Shared With All Operational Personnel

**WARNING!**
Workers risk possible injury or death when riding on or working near refuse collection vehicles.

Public employers should train their employees on the following:

1. **Observe safety procedures when backing up.**

   * **Drivers should do the following:**
     - Stop backing immediately if visual contact is lost with workers on foot.
     - Resume backing only when visual contact is restored with workers on foot.
     - Use a co-worker as a spotter.
     - Use agreed upon hand signals to communicate with the spotter.
     - Insure the trucks back-up alarm is working.

   * **Other crew members should do the following:**
     - Step off the riding steps before the driver begins to back-up.
     - Never cross or step behind the vehicle when it is backing-up or when its backup lights are on.
     - Remain inside the vehicle cab unless needed to act as a spotter.

   * **Spotters should do the following:**
     - Remain visible in the driver’s mirrors.
     - Maintain a clear view of the hazard area (driver’s blind spot) behind the vehicle.

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• Stay clear of the vehicle’s path.
• Avoid walking backwards.
• Use agreed upon hand signals to communicate with the driver.
• Be sure that no one is on the riding steps or behind the vehicle before signaling the driver to start backing up.
• Immediately signal the driver to stop if any person or object enters the area behind the truck.
• Signal the driver to stop if the spotter must change positions when the vehicle is backing up.

• Be extremely observant of the driver’s blind spot behind the vehicle.

Drivers should do the following:
• Wait for step riders to signal before putting the vehicle in motion.
• Avoid sudden starts and stops that could cause riders to be thrown from the steps.

2. Observe safe riding procedures.

Refuse collectors should do the following:
• Ride in the cab or a separate vehicle when not on the collection route.
• Use riding steps only when the vehicle is moving forward for short distances (0.2 miles or less) at slow speeds (10 miles per hour or less).
• After the vehicle has stopped, step, do not jump, on or off the riding steps.
• Wear slip resistant footwear.

Safe Work Practices
Save Lives

For Additional Information on Public Employee Safety and Health Contact:

Safety Issues, Recordkeeping and Discrimination Complaints
New Jersey Department of Labor
PEOSH Program
PO Box 386
Trenton, NJ 08625-0386
609-292-0767
800-624-1644

Health Issues
New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
PEOSH Program
PO Box 360
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360
609-984-1863