



SANITATION DEPARTMENT & TRASH TRUCK SAFETY

Handling both commercial and residential trash can lead to many exposures including bloodborne pathogens, toxic chemicals, and other hazardous substances. Sanitation employees are exposed to all weather elements in addition to a variety of physical factors. Knowing and understanding the hazards that could pose as a threat can make a difference in the lives of those that perform these duties.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS AND CHEMICAL EXPOSURE

Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment to protect yourself from harmful exposure to blood, bodily fluids, cuts, and chemicals. Household waste is typically unregulated, leading to an increased risk for the chance to come into contact with sharp objects and harmful substances. Understand what risks are associated with bloodborne pathogen and chemical exposure, and know the best ways to respond to an accidental exposure. See the toolbox talks for PPE, Bloodborne Pathogens, and Chemical Safety to better understand each of these factors.

SAFETY AROUND EQUIPMENT

It is important to be aware that equipment can malfunction at any time, for any number of reasons. Remaining alert and focused while around heavy machinery is an important part of the job that should be taken seriously.

While accidents can result from equipment malfunction, they often occur as a result of human error as well. Operators should always check surroundings for safety before engaging and operating equipment, and everyone in the vicinity should be aware of these operations. Back up cameras, back up alarms, and other safety devices increase awareness of hazards while equipment is in use.

DURING TRANSIT

If employees manually collect trash into the trash truck, they may be standing on a rear step while riding from stop to stop. It is important to wear proper footwear for this task, and also ensure that the step is clean and free from debris or anything that could decrease traction. During winter months, these steps can become snow packed, and need proper attention to remain safe for employees to use. Additionally, your city should have a policy in place for how long employees can ride on the back step, as fatigue can lead to an increased risk for accidents.

