

Striving for Safety – It’s Our Job!

Lisa Lampert, Consultant, Kessler Consulting, Inc.

Kessler Consulting, Inc. (KCI) understands that for both the public and private sector, striving for safety, is important to any collection operation. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released the preliminary results from the “Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries” in 2011. Unfortunately, the Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors category moved up from the 7th most deadly occupation in 2010, to the 4th most deadly in 2011. This is sobering news for our industry where we strive daily to protect the safety of our drivers and those they serve.

Three events cause the majority of fatal injuries, including roadway incidents (23%), contact with objects and equipment (14%), and falls, slips, and trips (14%). Many roadway incidents are the outcome of working in an environment made unpredictable by traffic, weather, and customer interactions. Drivers must be prepared to handle these challenging situations. KCI helps clients develop programs that train drivers on the proper operation of their equipment, traffic laws and facility rules, and defensive driving techniques which will help them react appropriately to unpredictable situations and achieve safe outcomes.

Utilizing proper routing techniques can also mitigate traffic issues that contribute to roadway incidents. KCI knows that routing best practices include avoiding heavily-traveled streets during rush hours, bypassing congested intersections, and minimizing left turns. In addition, drivers are responsible to ensure that their vehicles have passed a Department of Transportation (DOT) pre-trip

safety inspection and that they are vigilant while behind the wheel, both of which require drivers to be well-rested and focused.

Incidents resulting from contact with objects and equipment, as well as falls, slips, and trips, can be greatly reduced by adopting fully-automated



collection systems. Our experience with collection programs has taught us that fully-automated collection vehicles require only one worker, a driver who remains in the cab during collection; this avoids a rear-end injury or fatality. Automated collection also eliminates the need to step on and off the vehicle repeatedly, avoiding lifting actions that could cause injury. In contrast, rear end vehicles require both a driver and a

collection worker. Manual collection at the rear of the vehicle can prove deadly. In a recent two year period, sadly, four solid waste workers were killed in Florida while loading refuse into the rear of a collection truck.

If semi-automated or manual collection systems are being used, drivers and collectors must be especially well-trained in proper collection and lifting procedures, procedures for riding on the back the truck, utilizing hand signals, and maintaining eye contact at all times. KCI doesn't recommend “double-siding,” a practice whereby collectors simultaneously collect containers from both sides of the street. It is a very dangerous practice and should never be conducted; collectors should never cross a street to collect solid

waste.

The increasing danger of collecting solid waste can be reduced, and even eliminated, by implementing strong training programs and best practices, utilizing automated equipment, and creating a strong culture of safety within an organization. KCI believes safety is everybody's responsibility in order to keep collection staff safe in Florida!

kessler consulting inc.
innovative waste solutions

Recycling, Composting & Solid Waste Planning

- Program Planning, Design & Implementation
- RFP Preparation and Evaluation
- Greening & Sustainability Development
- Optimization Studies • Privatization Analyses
- Waste Composition Studies • Facility Audits
- Technology Evaluations • Feasibility Studies

Tel: **813-971-8333** Fax: **813-971-8582**

www.kesconsult.com