



SAFETY MONDAY

September 24, 2012

New Federal Data Reveals Sharp Increase in Collection Worker Fatalities

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) issued its annual report on workplace fatalities in 2011, and the news isn't good for the solid waste industry. According to BLS, there were 34 "refuse and recyclable material collector" workplace fatalities last year, compared to 26 in 2010. This is the second year in a row where the number of worker fatalities has increased, and reverses much of the great progress that the industry made in reducing these tragic events over the past decade.

Solid waste collection workers are now considered to have the 4th most dangerous job in the United States. (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>) According to NSWMA's data, a substantial number of these fatal accidents occurred at smaller companies. The leading causes of these accidents were the driver turning over the truck, backing, and falling off the vehicle.

The workers who died last year on the job were just like many of you, with spouses, parents and children. All employers and employees in the industry are urged to make safety a core value and keep safety in mind when they show up for work, during the pre-trip, on the route, in the maintenance shop, and at the landfill, transfer station or recycling facility.

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