THE STATE OF SOLID WASTE SAFETY
AN INDUSTRY UPDATE

SWANA OLD DOMINION CHAPTER
ANNUAL SAFETY SUMMIT
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SWANA is the largest association for the waste sector in the U.S. with 10,000+ members.

SWANA members include reps from local governments, national companies, small haulers, disposal facilities, equipment mfrs, consultants....

SWANA’s core programs are training, certification/education, research, and safety
Renewed Focus on Safety

SWANA HQ & chapters are putting increased emphasis on improving the industry’s safety record:

- Chapter-based Safety Ambassadors
- Safety Monday
- Fatality Alerts
- Classroom Safety/Compliance Training
- Safety Awards/Safety Summit -- @WASTECON Nashville -- August 2018
- Website - [www.swana.org/safety](http://www.swana.org/safety)
- *Slow Down to Get Around*
- Hauler Outreach events – Ohio, SC, NC
- Partnering with NWRA/ISRI/EREF/NGVA

Virginia Old Dominion Safety Ambassador
Dennis Batts
Fairfax County DPW
The current safety record of the waste industry is unacceptable!

Despite:

– SWANA’s increased efforts
– More attention by many cities and companies
– New state laws (SDTGA) and federal rules (ELDs)
In the United States, waste/recycling collection workers continue to have the 5th highest fatality rate in the country

- Higher than police officers or firefighters
- Fatality rate has increased since 2009 after 10 year decline
- On average, 1 U.S. waste worker dies weekly on the job
- Probably doesn’t include all worker deaths [why not?]

Many of the worker fatalities occur at small employers in the private sector (i.e., small haulers)
The federal government’s Dec 2017 worker fatality report (for 2016) found:

– 33 collection fatalities
– 9 landfill fatalities
– 0 MRF fatalities (but SWANA is aware of several)

SWANA issued a 2017 fatality report in April 2018:

-38 workers & 94 third-party deaths in US/Canada
In the first 10 months of 2018, there have been about 126 U.S. deaths involving the solid waste industry:

49 worker fatalities
- 31 collection
- 18 post-collection & long-haul

77 third-party deaths – other drivers/peds

Federal government is releasing 2017 worker injury/illness data today and 2017 fatality data on December 18.

Collection 4.9  Landfill 4.7  MRF 5.5 (2016 BLS data)
WHO IS HAVING THESE ACCIDENTS/INJURIES?

- Large national companies
- Regional companies
- Small haulers
- Local governments
Amtrak train carrying 200 Members of Congress, staff, & families hit a garbage truck in Virginia (Jan 31)
Unprecedented

- Trucks are catching on fire with increased frequency, and NG trucks create new maintenance and safety issues
- Increased use of lithium-ion batteries poses major danger to disposal facilities
Unprecedented

• IS THIS ACCEPTABLE?
• WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO PREVENT MORE DEATHS IN OUR INDUSTRY AND INVOLVING OUR TRUCKS?
“I agree to provide a safe and healthful workplace to my employees and contract workers. I pledge to consider worker, customer, and public safety in every decision we make. Our mission is to serve customers safely. If we cannot do it safely, then we will not do it at all.”
How can you implement this pledge?

Change the Safety Culture!

- Management Leadership
- Employee Participation
- Job Hazard Analysis
- Hazard Controls
- Accident/Injury Investigation
- Recordkeeping/Program Review
Implementation

Specific actionable suggestions:

1. Engage the front-line by using pics/video
2. Make Safety Personal for your Workers

3. Review Your Safety Data & look for patterns
   – Every muni/company is different – routes/trucks/budget
   Most common: backing/rear end accidents, strains/sprains & slips/trips/fall injuries
The financial costs of major accidents can easily exceed $1 million (settlement/jury award; legal fees; insurance increases; management time)

- Fla - $25 million jury award (Oct 2018)
- Conn - $13.6 million settlement w/ hauler (April 2018)
- Illinois - $4.75 million settlement w/City of Evanston (Dec 2017)
- Georgia - $11 million settlement w/ hauler (Nov 2016)
- Oregon - $14 million jury award (May 2016) (reduced to $3.5M)
- Michigan - $14.4 million jury award (March 2015)
Conclusions

- Solid waste collection/disposal can be dangerous work - Employers have a responsibility to provide safety training and information to workers to help them prevent accidents and injuries.

- Successful employers are changing the safety culture by engaging their employees and getting them to change their unsafe behaviors.

- SWANA wants to help all waste employers in Virginia reduce accidents and injuries as we work to get the waste sector off the list of 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States.
Be Safe! Thank you!

Questions?

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