

# Hazards of Refuse Collection

**National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) studies have identified common hazards related to operating and working near vehicles that collect refuse and machines that compact it.**

Between 1980 & 1992 there were:

- 450 worker deaths related to refuse collection
- 303 of the deaths were vehicle-related
- 110 deaths from workers slipping or falling from the vehicle
- 20 deaths resulted from vehicles backing over the worker

**Employers and employees can help prevent worker injuries and deaths from refuse collection vehicles in motion. They can do this by developing safe work procedures and by increasing employee awareness through training. Training topics should include:**

- Limited use of riding steps:
  - At 10 mph or less
  - No further than 0.2 miles
  - Not while the vehicle is backing up
- Safe Backing Procedures
- Safe Riding Procedures
- Vehicle back-up alarms
- Better communications between driver and collectors through hand signals
- Making collectors stand out by wearing high-visibility garments
- Use of spotters when backing vehicle
- Making collectors aware of drivers' blind spots

The PESH Consultation Program can help employers develop safe work practices for drivers and collectors. To take advantage of these services, contact your nearest PESH Office:

Albany	(518) 457-5508
Binghamton	(607) 721-8211
Buffalo	(716) 847-7133
Garden City	(516) 228-3970
New York City	(212) 775-3548
Rochester	(585) 258-4570
Syracuse	(315) 479-3212
Utica	(315) 793-2258
White Plains	(914) 997-9514

The Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau is committed to protecting the well-being of public employees by reducing the injuries to public employees across the state. One of the ways we do this is by providing technical assistance to Solid Waste Departments throughout New York State.

The New York State Department of Labor is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.