Collection Safety Part 2

Collection is one of the most dangerous activities in the industry. Unfortunately, workers have tragically lost their lives due to being backed-over by trucks or struck by on-coming vehicles while exiting their trucks. In addition to vehicle accidents, collecting material involves other potential hazards, such as lifting injuries, slips, trips and falls, and cuts and abrasions. However, these fatal accidents can be prevented by taking proper precautions.

Proper lockout/tagout (LOTO) practices and procedures safeguard workers from hazardous energy releases. The rule is easy to follow, but when trucks break down and you get behind schedule, we tend to take shortcuts to get back on the road; or when you have to crawl inside your truck to clean it; or after you dump your trash out of the back of your truck and you get under the suspended tailgate. It's scenarios like these that management needs to step in and coach the employee in the right direction to prevent potential hazards.

For most of this safety topic on collections we tend to lean toward the process of collecting the material, and never really discuss the safety issues with unloading material at the landfill. However, there are still similar safety concerns as when collecting. When entering the landfill, make sure you understand the safety rules because each landfill has its own set of rules. Most accidents occur at the landfill face. Large equipment is operating at the same time as commercial and residential haulers. Two major safety concerns to look out for are invisibility and getting struck by a moving object. Once again follow the rules of the landfill, ride along with your employees to understand the process, and keep a good professional work relationship with the landfill personnel.

Also, below is a link to help guide you on preventing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) which is another problem in our industry which we tend to forget about.