Post Collection Safety and Customer Outreach

The preventable, 2019 post-collection fatality facilities below exemplify the need to maintain and enforce safe behaviors at post-collection facilities and provide regular customer outreach.

New Orleans, LA. – A man was killed Monday when he was accidentally struck by a tractor and buried inside the Gentilly Landfill Click Here. Firefighters were dispatched to the landfill at 9300 Almonaster Avenue after workers noticed that a "spotter" was missing. A search and rescue team and coworker located him buried under debris.

Oskaloosa, Kan. — A waste services employee died at a landfill north of Lawrence Click Here. The incident happened just after 7 a.m. Friday at Hamm Landfill in Jefferson County. While backing on to the tipper, the driver of a truck-tractor crushed an operator between the truck and the dock.

Maintain and Enforce Safe Behaviors on Tipping Floors

- **Speed limits** – Some customers are willing to take unacceptable safety risks speeding on main access roads and temporary roads near the active face. It is critical sites clearly post speed limits on access roads and temporary roads. One idea to grab drivers' attention is post irregular speed limits like “Speed Limit 24 ½”. Common speed limits on main access roads are 25mph and near the working face 5, 10 and 15 mph

- **Spacing** – An accident, injury or fatality, by definition, is when spacing is reduced to zero. Spacing should be based on length of trucks and worst-case scenarios, like end dumps tipping over and roll off doors blowing in the wind. Minimum spacing is commonly on the order of 10-15 feet and spacing between end dumps and longer trucks may be on the order of 60 feet. Maintaining adequate spacing is critical to tipping floor safety.

- **PPE** – PPE should be required for all employees and professional drivers. Typical minimum PPE consists of high visibility safety vest, hard hat, steel toe/shank boots, eye protection and potentially more, depending upon job hazard assessment. Requiring PPE for public customers can be a challenge, but even inexpensive, high-visibility vests can provide life-saving visibility

All Site Employees Play a Critical Role

- **Scalehouse Attendants** – The first and most-public face of a post-collection site and the first to set site safety expectations by notifying customers of critical safety rules and demonstrating a safety-first culture in a courteous, professional manner

- **Traffic Directors** – Re-iterate site safety rules to customers and actively control the tipping floors with zero-tolerance for unsafe behavior. This can be a challenge at heavily trafficked sites, but if a Traffic Director does not intervene when safety violations are observed, the message to the customer is safety is not the site’s priority

- **Operators** – It is not easy for operators in production mode to take the time to address unsafe behaviors, but it is critical they do so. A supporting Traffic Director and a robust communication network (two-way radios, CBs, etc.) enable busy operators to play a vital role in addressing observed safety rules violations

- **Management** – Ultimately, management must model safe behavior, require safe actions by employees and customers and follow up with customers’ management teams to address any unsafe behavior by their drivers

Customer Outreach

- **Mailings** – Emails, or letters to customers drive safe behavior by letting customer management teams know that the site is serious about safety. Links to safety videos, site rules and other safety literature may be included. Safety outreach fosters communication between site and customer and builds valuable relationships. Any time is a good time for customer safety outreach, especially the spring before the summer increase in traffic

- **Events** – Site safety events are a great way to interact with drivers and communicate the importance of site safety rules in a fun, positive setting as opposed to the less-fun necessity of admonishing drivers when they exhibit unsafe behavior. Sites may pair cold drinks, food, and snacks with site safety rules and a safety pledge. SWANA offers a safety pledge and assistance coordinating site safety events

- **Safety violation notification** – Inevitably, some drivers will exhibit unsafe behaviors. It is critical that site staff immediately address safety violations in a courteous and professionally manner. Sometimes, it is a simple matter of educating the driver on site safety rules and reasons for the rules. Other times, drivers may push back and
demonstrate disregard for safety rules; in which case their supervisors should be notified immediately. Formal written safety violation notices can be effective for documenting and communicating safety violations. Customers are typically very interested to know which drivers exhibit unsafe behaviors and are grateful to know they are utilizing a disposal facility with a pro-active safety culture.

Post-collection sites are statistically safer than the collections environment, in large part since they are relatively-controlled facilities, as opposed to public cities and streets. However, post-collections facilities are only as safe as site employees make them, which requires a pro-active safety culture where all employees actively participate and are encouraged to challenge unsafe behaviors by customers, fellow employees and management.