**Homeless Sleeping in Dumpsters**

Every year homeless people seeking shelter in garbage bins are accidentally tipped into garbage collection vehicles. In some cases, the result is a rude awakening and a close call Click here in others the result is death Click here.

As winter closes in and temperatures drop, the need for warmth and shelter can make a commercial dumpster look appealing to the homeless. Unfortunately, that dumpster is death trap if tipped into a garbage collection truck and compacted.

Talk to any veteran driver and you will hear something like the following quote from an unknown waste industry driver: “Sometimes, when my truck lifts up a dumpster, I’ll hear yelling and banging—and a homeless person will pop up out of there. When it’s cold or wet outside, they see the bins as a nice warm place to get out of the rain.”

**What can we do to help mitigate this issue?**

- Place warning labels on dumpsters
- Lock dumpsters, or provide security and monitoring of waste container enclosures
- Situational awareness: Know the locations that homeless folks frequent; certain neighborhoods, strip malls and alleys, etc.
- Driver or route managers can check containers prior to tipping
- Not just inside of the container. Also, be aware of people sleeping behind and around the containers; especially when the container is in a roomy enclosure
- Container type matters – Recycle and clean cardboard containers are more readily frequented then garbage and trash containers
- Shake the can with the forks before tipping to give anyone that may be inside it a chance to alert the driver and get out

*Keeping people out of waste collection containers is critical to preventing unnecessary injuries and death. Container warning labels, locking and securing waste containers, driver awareness of areas frequented by the homeless and shaking containers and listening for human occupancy during tipping operations can significantly reduce this problem.*

*Please make sure your customers and drivers are aware of this issue and are taking the necessary precautions*