

Waste Collection Industry

Discussion paper | WorkSafeNB | May, 2015

INTRODUCTION

To achieve its safety goal, “*Our vigorous pursuit of a safe work culture will lead to a decline in workplace injuries,*” WorkSafeNB has established a number of strategies, one of which is **focusing on high-risk industries.**

Because waste collection has been identified as a high-risk industry, this sector is being provided with additional support and services. Since 2003, there have been four fatalities in this industry, and nearly half of its lost-time injuries were severe because of the type of injuries and the time needed for the injured worker to return to work. Here is a breakdown of the numbers:

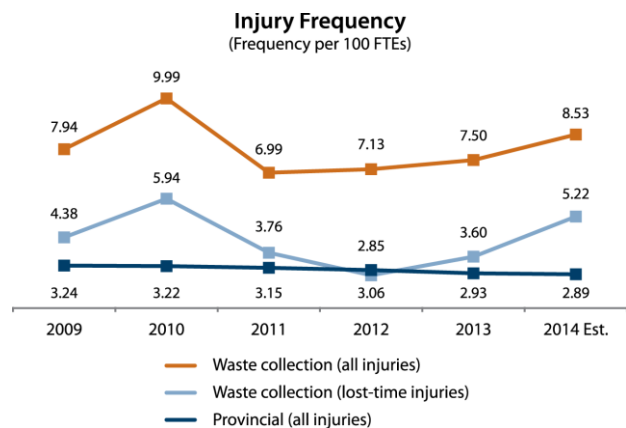
- Two fatalities in 2003: both employees were struck by a waste container
- Two fatalities in 2010: one employee was struck by a waste container and one employee was struck by a vehicle
- Between 2009-2014, workers in the industry sustained 172 injuries
 - 81 no lost-time injuries
 - 91 lost-time injuries
- For 41% of the lost time injuries, the injured worker missed more than 4 weeks of work

The waste collection industry currently comprises 31 companies with approximately 356 employees. The number of employees per company varies greatly, with eight companies having more than 10 employees and many small businesses with only one two employees. Seven municipalities collect their own waste.

INJURY FREQUENCY

Injury frequency is the number of injuries per 100 employees (full-time equivalent). When the waste collection frequency is compared with the provincial frequency, it is notable that:

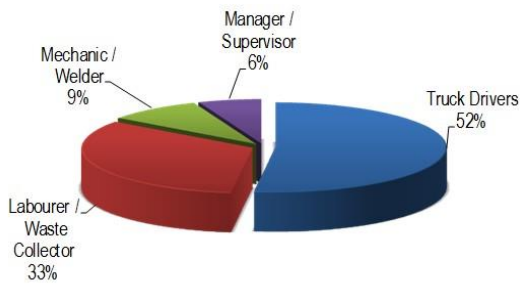
- The provincial frequency has been declining steadily
- The waste collection frequency has been in an upward trend since 2011
- The waste collection frequency varies between 2.5 and 3.5 more than the provincial average



INJURIES BY OCCUPATION

(2009-2013)

Analysis of who is most affected by these injuries indicates 33% were waste collectors and 52% were truck drivers. In many cases, the truck driver is also the waste collector. Together, that accounts for 85% of all injuries. The remaining 15% were mechanics, welders, managers/supervisors.

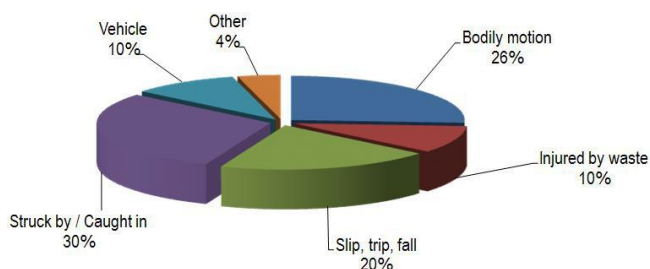


EVENTS LEADING TO INJURIES

(2009-2013)

A review of the events leading to the injuries indicates the causes were:

- Bodily motion: lifting and throwing waste, twisting, repetitive movements and other bodily movements
- Struck by or caught in: objects, chemicals, hot objects, door or gate, equipment and struck against equipment or object
- Vehicle: vehicle motion, struck by vehicle and vehicle collisions
- Slip, trip and fall: exiting cab forward without 3- point contact; exiting cab or leaving platform while truck in motion; falling from vehicle in motion; and falling on ice or uneven ground
- Other: exposure to environment and exposure to welding light, fire and other unknown



NATURE OF INJURIES

(2009-2013)

Approximately half of the injuries sustained by workers in the waste collection industry were soft-tissue injuries that include sprains, strains, tears and hernias. Cuts, lacerations, abrasions and bruises were the second-most common type of injury followed by fractures and crush injuries.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Incident investigations by WorkSafeNB health and safety officers reveal some of the following contributing factors:

- Lack of awareness of health and safety practices
- Lack of familiarity with workplace risk factors
- Inadequate orientation and training
- Irregular vehicle inspections
- Inconsistent pre-use inspection of mobile equipment

GOALS OF THE STRATEGY

The goals of the initiative are:

- Reduce the number of injuries
- Reduce the severity of injuries
- Promote a safe work culture

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

IN FOCUS INDUSTRY APPROACH

The implementation of an industry action plan faces a number of challenges, including:

- Variations in waste-collecting companies:
 - Type of equipment used
 - Number of staff employed
 - Type of clients they serve:
 - Residential and/or commercial
 - Urban versus rural
- Some cities/municipalities collect waste within their boundaries
- Contract tendering by Regional Service Commissions, Local Service Districts and municipalities, leading to an inconsistency in health and safety contract requirements
- Frequent contract changes affecting the workplace
- Rapidly evolving industry

ACTION PLAN

In November 2014, WorkSafeNB adopted an action plan for the initiative. The plan was presented to stakeholders in two consultation sessions. During these sessions, the stakeholders accepted the plan and suggested additions. The modified action plan has four streams:

Stream 1:

Actions with waste collectors:

- Initial consultation with waste collection companies and municipalities that perform their own waste collection to:
 - Supply information about the initiative
 - Gather information about the company's operation
 - Plan a customized awareness education for all employees
- Deliver the customized awareness education and supply educational materials to employees
- Follow-up with companies, if required
- Visits from health and safety officers using three inspection checklists

Stream 2:

Meet with contract administrators (Regional Service Commissions, Local Service Districts and Municipalities) to recommend specific health and safety elements to be consistently included in waste collection contracts.

Stream 3:

Launch a public awareness campaign to engage and inform New Brunswickers.

Stream 4:

Collaborate with provincial government departments on the following recommendations:

- Inclusion of specific and consistent health and safety requirements in contracts for waste collection

- Standardization of residential waste collection throughout New Brunswick, both in urban and rural areas

Engaging Waste Collection Stakeholders in Safety
PREVENTION / COMPLIANCE / RECOMMENDATIONS

WASTE COLLECTORS
 Companies
 Municipal Services

WASTE CONTRACT ADMINISTRATORS
 Regional Service Commissions
 Local Service Districts
 Municipalities

GOVERNMENT

GENERAL PUBLIC
 Residents

Consultation

Consultation

Recommendations

Awareness

**Health and safety
 customized awareness
 education**

**Awareness &
 recommendations**

Educational material

**Potential follow-up
 consultations**

**Health and safety
 visits and inspections**