
Waste Collection Risks

Waste management is a necessary activity around the world, but involves a variety of health hazards. Municipal waste management encompasses a wide range of activities, including collecting garbage, collecting and sorting recyclable materials and collecting and processing of commercial and industrial waste. Waste management operation occupational risks associated with weather conditions, traffic accident, in circulatory problems and tensions with the public, in the exhaust gases, noise and inadequate lighting, which can lead to drops or strokes in environmental media. Risks from labour equipment associated with vehicle rescue and the waste bins.

There are also risks associated from work's timetables, which cause disruption of biological rhythms of workers (with effects on sleep, attention and oversight capacity-monitoring of the environment), family problems and difficulties to approach the work places), the rhythm of work, stress due to movement and in various contingencies of labor. Risks occur at every step in the process, from the point of the collection at homes, during transportation and at the sites of recycling or disposal. In many developing countries, municipal waste is collected manually, and collection of household waste is also a job which requires repeated heavy physical activity.

Municipal solid waste workers are at risk for a variety of occupational diseases as a result of daily exposure to work-related hazards. The socioeconomic status of waste workers is low and their working conditions are unfavorable. For waste collectors, the risk of disease resulting from exposure to various work hazards is high as well as the risk of fatal and nonfatal occupational accidents. Hazards in the waste and recycling industry is associated with four main routes:

- skin contact, especially through cuts and abrasions or through contact with the eye's mucus membrane;
 - injection through sharps injuries;
 - ingestion through hand to mouth contact (commonly experienced when eating, drinking or smoking); and
 - inhalation through the lungs.
- musculoskeletal problems are also common among waste collectors and in this work group nonfatal injuries are mainly musculoskeletal.

Municipal solid waste collection usually requires manually heavy physical activity. Among all occupational health issues, musculoskeletal problems are common among waste collectors in the form of nonfatal injuries because of the presence of such risk factors (lifting, carrying, pulling, and pushing). The higher percentage of musculoskeletal symptoms among workers

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could be attributed to the long duration of employment, the low job control, and the nature of their job, which is physically demanding.

Waste collectors are among the most highly exposed occupational groups with respect to health risks. The higher percentage of musculoskeletal symptoms among workers could be attributed to the long duration of employment, the low job control, and the nature of their job, which is physically demanding and involves lifting, pulling, pushing heavy loads, and frequent bending and twisting activities, and walking for long distances in their task profile. Also the less educated (illiterate or having less than primary education) collectors seem to be less aware of the potential hazards and health impacts related to the collection methods. The unfavorable working conditions of waste collectors could be ameliorated through engineering, medical, and legislative measures as well as a proper workplace health promotion model intervention.

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