



# Refuse Collection: Vehicle & Rider Safety



The Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) reported an increase in worker fatalities in 2022 in the United States and Canada after a dramatic drop in 2021. For 2022, SWANA recorded 46 solid waste industry worker fatalities, compared to 28 the year before. It's clear that working on or around a refuse truck can be dangerous, especially to pedestrians, collectors, or helpers. The following practices can help prevent accidents:

## Pre-Trip Inspection

One of the most important reasons you should inspect your vehicle on a daily basis for the safety of yourself and others on the road. According to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, it is a best practice to ensure these daily inspections are done.

- Refuse employees should inspect the packer, e-stops, cameras, and other control functions prior to leaving the yard.
- Both the driver and helper should perform the pre-trip inspection together to ensure everyone's safety is accounted for.

## Route Briefings

- Conduct a daily briefing to ensure the driver and helpers know their assigned routes, weather conditions, and any coverage issues for the day.
- Review the previous week's reported hazards or safety incidents.

## Riding Procedures

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has published Safety Standards for Mobile Refuse Collection and Compaction Equipment, which addresses safe operation and construction of the equipment and includes recommendations for riders. It is recommended that workers:

- Ride only in the vehicle cab or on steps specifically designed for riding.
- Remain inside the vehicle cab until the vehicle is completely stopped.
- Ensure that no riders are using the riding steps when the vehicle is backing, exceeding 10 miles per hour, or traveling more than 0.2 miles (usually about 2-3 blocks).
- Ensure that no one rides on the loading sills or in hoppers.

Additionally, rider steps and handles should meet the following recommendations:

- Riding steps should be slip resistant, at least 220 square inches, and capable of supporting 500 pounds. The steps should be at least 8 inches deep, mounted behind the rearmost axle of the vehicle, and no more than 25 inches above the ground.
- Grab handles should be capable of withstanding 500 lbs. when pulled.
- Warning signs should be posted to prohibit step use when traveling above 10 mph or when backing.

## Additional Resources:

- [SWANA's Hauler Outreach](#)
- [5 to Stay Alive](#)
- [National Waste & Recycling Association Safety Mondays](#)
- [TMLIRP Media Library](#)
  - Vehicle Inspection for Solid Waste (DVD) Disk #694
  - Rear Loader Operations and Safety (DVD) Disk #697