



## Transfer Stations: Are Your Operations Safe?



Solid waste transfer stations offer convenience for both collection operations and the public, but these types of facilities also present multiple safety exposures that must be managed. Many transfer stations operate inside buildings that are congested, poorly lit, and have slick, debris-filled floors. This mix of physical characteristics along with heavy vehicle and foot traffic creates the potential for serious incidents. Employees and users of these facilities have experienced severe injuries and fatalities during transfer station operations.

In one incident, a transfer station customer fell six feet from an elevated unloading area to a concrete pad next to the refuse container and later died from the injuries. At another facility, a solid waste employee was fatally injured on the transfer station floor when he was backed over by a front-end loader operating inside the facility. The equipment operator did not see the employee before it was too late. Significant incidents can be prevented by following basic safety protocols and best practices such as these.

### Employee Safety

Transfer station employees are exposed to numerous hazards, including working regularly in proximity to heavy machinery, extreme noise, and temperatures, and falls. Safety efforts should include:

- Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment, including head, eye, foot, and hand protection, reflective safety vests, dust masks, and hearing protection, if working near heavy or loud equipment or machinery. Exposures should be reviewed and requirements for personal protective equipment should be communicated to all employees and visitors at the facility.
- Proximity alarms, such as flashing lights and reversing alerts, should be installed on all machinery. Due to the confined environment, the types of alarms utilized should be reviewed to see what type is most effective.
- Routes for foot traffic in the structure should be identified and enforced among all employees and visitors. Barriers and/or painted routes help assure persons stay clear of machinery.
- Regular safety meetings and task-specific training, along with audits of operations, help in raising employee awareness of exposures. In addition, audits will assist with proactively identifying potential areas for improvement.
- Vehicle/equipment operation standards and training. All machinery operators must be adequately trained.

### Customer Safety

Providing a safe environment is also important for customers who visit. Developing and communicating customer safety procedures helps reduce potential injuries or vehicle damage. These activities should include:

- Providing a separate and safe unloading area for self-haulers that is away from large equipment or vehicles.
- Requiring customers to stay in designated areas when outside of vehicles.
- Installing safety barriers around areas where fall or crushing hazards may exist.
- Accounting for site users by logging entry.
- Posting clear and specific signage for users of the facility and providing verbal instructions when possible.
- Locating wheel stops properly to prevent vehicles from backing into pits or bins.

**Additional resources can be found at our [TMLIRP Media Library](#):**

- Basics of Spotter Safety – Transfer Station, Disk 62
- Basics of Transfer Station Safety, Disk 68
- Equipment Safety – Loader (Transfer Station), Disk 78
- Traffic Safety – General, Disk 85
- Slips, Trips, and Falls (Transfer Stations), Disk 87
- Be Safe, Be Proud: At the Transfer Station, Disk 128
- Handling Difficult Loads, Disk 79