

Safety and health alert

04/09 Incidents involving tailgates of rubbish trucks

Incident

Following two recent incidents where employees have been struck by the closing rear door (tailgate) of front loading rubbish trucks, WorkSafe reminds those involved in the waste management industry of the risk of serious injury to persons working near rubbish trucks when they are opening and closing their rear doors.

In both situations a person, other than the driver of the truck, was cleaning the back seal of the tailgate or working at the back of the truck when the tailgate was in the raised position. It was also identified that safety props were not used when persons were working under the tailgate of the truck and the closing time of the rear doors of the trucks was less than 20 seconds.

Factors to consider

- People can receive serious injuries if struck by the rear door of a rubbish truck.
- The rubbish truck driver may not be able to see people standing at the rear of the truck when the rear door is closing.
- Safety props were not used when people were working under the open tailgate.
- The closing time of the rear door was less than the recommended 20 seconds.

Recommendations

1. Employers must ensure that employees receive information, instruction and training on working safely near the rear of rubbish trucks.
2. Employers must ensure safe work procedures are in place to avoid people being put at risk of injury at the rear of rubbish trucks.
3. Safety features of plant must be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. For example: rear view cameras fitted and in operation; safety props to be available, and used when people need to access area at rear of the truck when the tailgate is open.
4. Plant must be adequately maintained e.g. ensure rear door of truck does not open or close in less than 20 seconds.

Further information

- Manufacturer's instructions
- Code of Practice for Safety and Health within the Waste Management and Recycling Industries (currently being revised) Waste Management Association of Australia (WA Branch)
- WorkSafe Victoria – Non-Hazardous Waste and Recyclable Materials: Occupational health and safety guidelines for the collection, transport and unloading of non-hazardous waste and recyclable materials
- WorkSafe's internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email safety@commerce.wa.gov.au

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Government of **Western Australia**
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