

**2016 Safety Award entry  
Biggest Safety Improvement  
City of Tempe**

**2016 Safety Award Entry  
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City of Tempe Solid Waste & Recycling Services Team**

Contact: David Tavares, [david\\_tavares@tempe.gov](mailto:david_tavares@tempe.gov), phone number: 480-350-2819

SWANA Member number: 50904

Title: City of Tempe – Creating a Culture of Safety

Jurisdiction: We provide waste, recycling and bulk trash collection for the City of Tempe as well as some unincorporated county areas within city limits.

Population served: 172,816

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## **City of Tempe SWANA Safety Award Submission: Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

It's easy for Solid Waste service providers to say they care about safety. Who wouldn't make that claim? What stands out about Tempe is that we live and breathe safety – it's our culture. While that may seem like another easy word to say, our data backs it up. We cut accidents in half from 2014 to 2015. We had zero industrial accidents in the second half of 2015, a direct result of our extensive training program. Our accidents per 100,000 miles driven saw a 75 percent improvement. Keep in mind – this is all happening in a city with 165 miles of alleyways and 1,241 miles of roadways. Because of these significant improvements, we believe the City of Tempe's Solid Waste and Recycling Services team is a strong candidate for the Biggest Safety Improvement Award.

## **City of Tempe SWANA Safety Award Submission: Award Criteria**

### **1. Describe your safety program, including your use of Safety Monday and other safety information provided by SWANA.**

Tempe has a robust safety protocol that focuses on training, inspections and empowering operators.

#### Training

Every operator goes through an intensive new hire training to ensure he or she is equipped with the information and tools needed to safely operate a vehicle. The training includes review of the procedures of a proper pre and post trip, the vehicle inspection checklist, proper air brake tests, and the equipment training signed off by the Supervisors of each area such as residential, commercial, and uncontained bulk pickup.

Weekly tailgate meetings take place every Thursday morning and training is a significant component. The supervisors and managers take turns conducting trainings each week, helping to keep the approach fresh and the operators interested. Review of other necessary training such as LOTO, PPE, Heat Stress, Hearing Conservation, Defensive Driving and others help give all the driver's a well- rounded exposure to important safety topics.

Several SWANA tools are utilized to provide ongoing training to operators and supervisors. The team uses Safety Monday bulletins as a training tool at the weekly tailgate meetings. Several operators and supervisors have signed up for SWANA webinars, forums and have subscribed to email updates.

Operators are also given Accident Reduction Training (ART), a hands-on approach where team leaders go out into the field to provide one-on-one coaching.

Supervisors take part in Accident Investigation Training to prepare them in the event of an accident. This training also provides them with accident prevention tools that are shared with all the operators.

#### Inspections

Inspections are a crucial part of the team's safety protocol. Pre and post-trip inspections are conducted daily by each operator. This helps to identify any potential safety problems and helps shorten downtime with vehicles. The team also participates in "BINGO Bucket" each week, which is a game used to determine whose vehicle will be randomly inspected and who will perform a proper pre-trip inspection by a supervisor or manager.

#### Empowering operators

What sets Tempe apart from all other cities is its commitment to empowering operators to take pride in their jobs and to really care about the work they do. This is accomplished in a few ways.

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First, operators are encouraged to bring up safety concerns and make suggestions at the weekly tailgate meetings. This open-meeting setting gives operators a forum to field their ideas while also making managers and supervisors seem more accessible. Operators who prefer not to vocalize their ideas can remain anonymous by utilizing a suggestion box, which is read by managers on a monthly basis.

Recognition is another important tool for empowering Tempe's operators. Each month an "Operator of the Month" is chosen out of a pool of employees who have not had an accident, have left the yard on time, and completed pre and post trips all month. The winner is given driving gloves and a hat. Additionally, an "Operator of the Year" is chosen out of the twelve monthly winners.

Tempe Solid Waste and Recycling staff are also frequently chosen for the Public Works Division's Rio, Papago and A-Mountain Awards, which are given to employees from several different departments. In 2015, over 50 awards have been presented to staff members were recognized citywide for their efforts.

Corrective action is another component for empowering the team. Safety isn't just a tagline in Tempe – it's a culture in Tempe. Operators and staff are held accountable for any actions that compromise the safety of the city's resident's and employees. The city has a stringent corrective action process that starts with a documented E-Log, Memorandum to File, Written Reprimand, 1-3-5 day suspension and as high as termination. The process is to give additional training at each level so the trainer has the opportunity to correct any concerns with the operator before it gets into suspension.

**2. How do you measure results for your safety program? Examples include, but are not limited to: the frequency of accidents or injuries, workers compensation claims, amount paid for claims, reduction in hazards.**

Tempe measures safety in several ways. Some of the more common methods include the frequency of accidents and injuries and the number of workers compensation claims. The team also utilizes speed reports and pre/post-trips to analyze safety trends.

Tempe tracks vehicular accidents in 100,000 mile increments. This approach is beneficial because it keeps a matrix that is consistent and you can compare yourself to other cities that can be bigger or smaller than your city.

**3. What results did you use as a baseline for comparison to determine improvement between 2014 and 2015? (this may be either a calendar or fiscal year)**

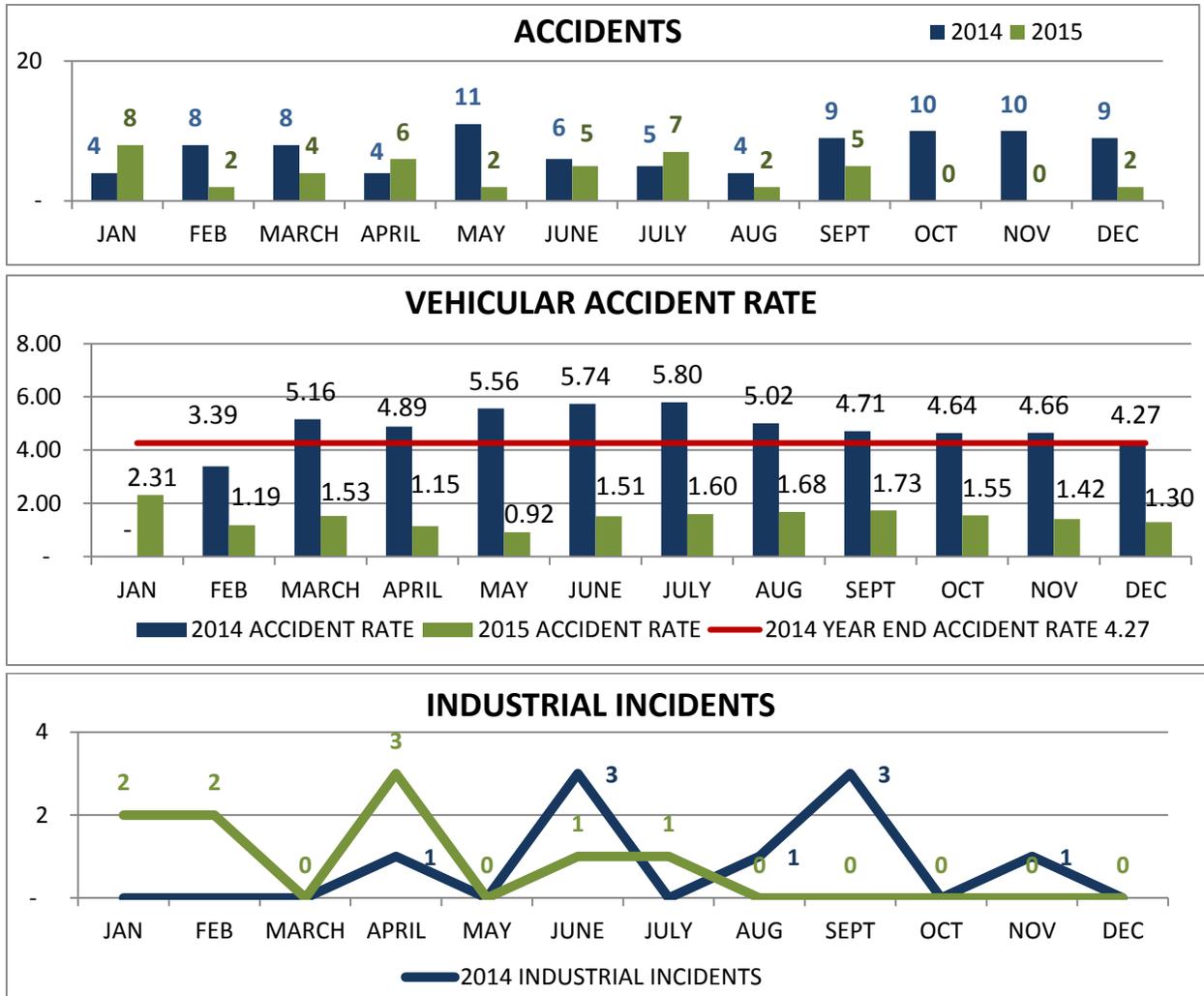
Tempe is utilizing the following results as a baseline to determine improvement between 2014 and 2015:

- Total number of accidents in 2014 and 2015
- Vehicular accident rate in 2014 and 2015
- Number of industrial accidents in 2014 and 2015
- Percentage of accidents per 100,000 miles
- Number of operators without accidents

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**4. How did you measure the safety improvement that you achieved in 2015?**

Tempe is measuring the 2015 safety improvements with the following data:



The total number of accidents for 2014 was 88. In 2015, the total was only 43 – that’s a 55 percent decrease in total accidents year over year.

We measure vehicle accidents per 100,000 miles driven. In 2014 our ending vehicle per 100K was 4.27 accidents. In 2015 our accident rate was 1.3 accidents per 100K miles. That’s just over a 75 percent decrease in vehicle accidents per 100,000 miles.

Though the amount of industrial accidents stayed the same in each year, our training efforts are clearly paying off since there were no accidents in the last five months of 2015.

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In 2014 we had 5 out of 44 operators go the entire year without an accident. In 2015 that number increased to 16 out of 44, which is a 66 percent improvement.

**5. To what do you attribute the improvement in your safety performance in 2015?**

The Tempe Solid Waste and Recycling team has a culture of safety. It is engrained in everything we do - each training session, every meeting held, and each one-on-one discussion. This philosophy, accompanied by extensive training and strong accountability guidelines, leads to a stronger work ethic and an empowered staff that takes pride in their work. A culture of safety is key to continuously improving the team's safety performance in 2015 and years to come.

**6. Why do you think your safety program deserves this improvement award?**

Tempe's focus on training, inspections and empowering employees has proven to be the recipe for success for our operators. We cut accidents in half in one year – that is a true testament to the dedication of the trainers and supervisors, as well as the operators, who are now taking more ownership of their roles in the community.

In addition to the compelling data, Tempe's model – creating and nurturing a culture of safety – is setting precedence for other city departments as well as organizations across Arizona. The city's fire department benchmarked many elements of Solid Waste's safety toolkit and has implemented the methodology in its operation. Tempe Solid Waste leaders are frequently asked to speak at SWANA AZ meetings and other industry events such as Safety Ambassadors and Judges for Rodeo Events.

Finally, this award would be dedicated to the operators and utilized as another recognition tool to inspire an ongoing culture of safety.