

SWANA 2016 Safety Awards
Best Safety Innovation
Municipality of East Hants

March 2016

Andrea Trask, Manager of Solid Waste
Municipality of East Hants (pop. 23,560)
Nova Scotia, Canada
(902) 883-7098 x.104 atrask@easthants.ca
SWANA Member ID: 906239



EAST HANTS
We live it!

Executive Summary

The Municipality of East Hants is a vibrant community in a uniquely central location in Nova Scotia, Canada in close proximity to Halifax Regional Municipality and the world famous Bay of Fundy. The Municipality serves over 23,000 residents in both urban and rural settings. The Solid Waste Division for the Municipality provides curbside collection services of garbage, recyclables, organics, and e-waste on a bi-weekly system and owns/operates the East Hants Waste Management Centre (EHWMC). The Centre offers commercial and residential drop-off for metal, tire, e-waste, garbage, recyclables, organics, construction debris, and residential household hazardous wastes.

Over the past 12-months the Division has shifted their traditional efforts related to safety, and implemented various strategies to create an innovative culture of safety. These strategies included re-focused their communication (internal/external), project planning, training, and visual presence at the WMC. Further efforts are scheduled for 2016-17 to build on these successes.



Table of Contents

Question 1 3

Question 2 4

Question 3 5

Question 4 5

Question 5 8

Question 6 8

Question 1

Describe the safety innovation you implemented in 2015, and waste hazards you were seeking to address in taking this action.

Building Our Safety Culture - What, Why & How

The Municipality of East Hants rolled-out an organizational strategy with a mission to provide excellence in our service delivery and ensure those services support a healthy and sustainable community. This strategy included components such as Core Values, Organizational Values, Key Strategies, and Vision.



For 2015 (fiscal April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016) the Solid Waste Division focused on ensuring the entire team understood **what** a safety culture was. Many of the staff are longer term employees and while they are proficient in their duties and understand the need to work safely a definition of a safety culture has never been discussed.

As an organization there was a need to educate all employees on our Core Values and Organizational Values. In the Solid Waste Division we opted to merge those Values into our daily language and work. We needed employees to understand **why** this new focus was established, and so we worked to link to safety wherever possible.

Various initiatives were implemented to engage staff, including:

- ✓ Scheduled monthly staff safety meetings. While we previously held safety meetings there were times of inconsistency. In 2015-16 all meetings were booked in April for the entire year.
- ✓ Included on the staff safety meeting agenda - Staff Discussion Core Values or Organizational Values (with an assigned Value each month). The Manager reviewed the strategy definition and then staff would share a specific example related to their role and that Value.
- ✓ The Manager shared SWANA Safety Monday posts with staff (and our curbside collection contractor).

- ✓ For February (Contractor Safety Month) a specific safety reminder went to all regular contractors the Solid Waste Division works with and the team.
- ✓ The Manager coordinated Landfill Fire Training (with Dr. Tony Sperling) for the WMC Foreman, Manager, Emergency Management Office (EMO) Nova Scotia representative, and various Fire Departments (we have several volunteer departments).
- ✓ All Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for solid waste were reviewed and updated in 2014-15. To ensure that information is accurate and staff are diligent, in 2015 all SOPs were reviewed by a quarterly schedule. This schedule allowed for a more manageable review period, ensured ample time for discussion, and updates (where applicable) were completed in a timely manner.
- ✓ At the Waste Management Centre (WMC) new public signage was designed and posted to improve communication between staff and site-users and improve compliance.



Question 2

How did you measure results for your program before implementing your innovation?

In 2014-15 the Manager and the WMC Foreman discussed what could be done to streamline safety discussions, and how could we respond to the organization's new strategy. In review of past practice we recognized that we continued to be *reactive* in situations and less *proactive* efforts.

The following outlines previous safety efforts:

- Past staff safety meetings averaged 30-minutes, and mostly information was provided to staff. The schedule of meetings was inconsistent.
- Toolbox talks did not proactively discuss safety. These discussions often reviewed work plans and tasks.
- Training was focused on regulations requirements solely.
- Work in a culture of 'If there is no problem then there is no problem.'

Question 3

What results did you use as a baseline for comparison between the old program and the program after the innovation?

Baseline - Previous Efforts

- Safety discussions and activities focused on a culture of 'reactive'
- Staff safety meetings were inconsistent in schedule, and short. Very little discussion.
- Training was based on regulated/needed, little effort on innovative and collaborative opportunities

Review - Year 1

- Currently staff meetings run an average of 1-hour, and include various staff/items on the agenda, and includes time and topics for group discussion.
- Staff requested several training opportunities for the 2016-17 fiscal year, based on the open communication on safety and excellence. Previous years training outlined for the coming year would be the traditional required courses such as first aid, or lock-out tag-out. Examples of just a few training requests by staff include:
 - Prevention of Falls from Slips and Trips
 - Prevention of Hearing Loss from Workplace Noise
 - Mental Health
 - Office Ergonomics
 - Contractor Health & Safety
 - Stress in the Workplace
- Requests from the staff to forward comments/suggestions to the organization's Joint Occupations Health Safety (JOHS) Committee occurred throughout the year.
- Added projects for safety improvement at the Waste Management Centre, as requested by staff:
 - New signage/placement of signage
 - Addition of guardrails at specific locations at the Centre
 - Redesign of public drop-off upgrade project. Originally this project was budgeted for some minor adjustments to the layout of the public drop-off area. Mid-year the WMC Foreman and staff requested additional upgrades to ensure the project was aligned to our new safety culture. The changes were approved and the project completion has been moved into 2016-17.

Question 4

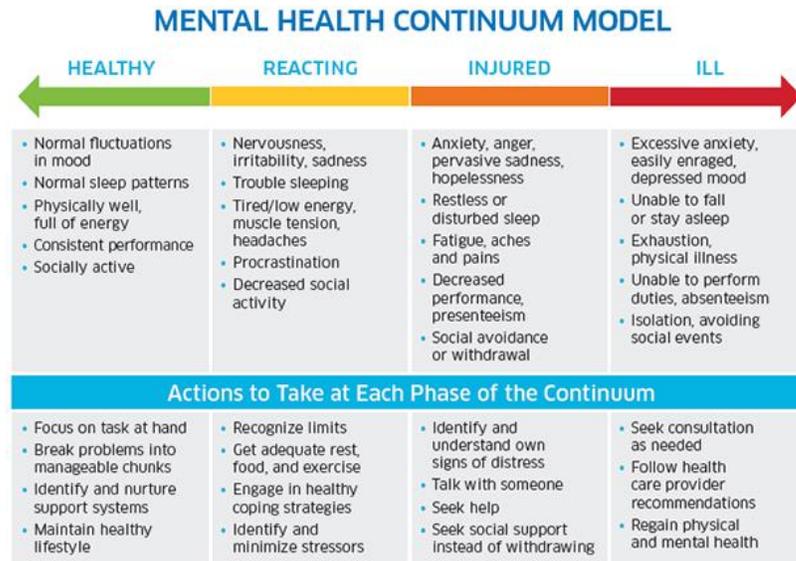
Over what period of time was the innovation implemented, and how?

This innovation project was implemented over the course of the year. Below outlines the topics discussed at monthly staff meetings, training coordinated (outside of traditional health & safety), and other initiatives.

- | | |
|-------|--|
| April | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core Value - <i>Respect</i>• Schedule of Staff Safety Meeting sent out (via e-calendars) |
| May | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core Value - <i>Integrity</i>• Launch of updated SOPs to staff - outlined plans for quarterly reviews |
| June | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core Value - <i>Fairness</i>• Shared Organization's OHS stats (from HR Officer) |

SWANA 2016 Safety Awards • Best Safety Innovation • Municipality of East Hants

- Toolbox Talk - working in hot weather
 - Discussed incident reports - turnaround time, completeness of forms
- July
- Core Value - *Learning*
 - Toolbox Talk - Lyme disease & ticks
- August
- Core Value - *Excellence*
 - SOP review schedule (next quarter)
 - Research on back-up beepers for work trucks discussed
- September
- Organizations Values - *Excellence, Fiscal Responsibility, and Stakeholder Engagement*
 - WMC staff completed hearing tests
 - All staff completed an online musculoskeletal injuries course
- October
- Organizations Values - *Responsive, transparent & accountable government, Innovation, Informed & sustainable decision making, Safe & Healthy workplace philosophy*
 - Landfill Fire Training - WMC Foreman, Manager, and stakeholders
 - Working Minds (Mental Health) Training - Manager



- November
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention - Scale Operator, Waste Compliance Officer, Equipment Operator
 - Reviewed employee performance evaluation form - specifically section that discusses Strategic Alignment.
- December
- Values Discussion - *Safe & Healthy Workplace Philosophy, Fairness & Respect, Innovation*
 - Toolbox Talk - Working in cold weather
 - OHS Committee - Three (3) topics from the Solid Waste Division were forwarded to the Committee for consideration on their topic list for 2016-17: Working Alone, Vehicle Safety, and Being a Visual Workplace
- January
- Toolbox Talk - General Housekeeping
 - OHS Committee - Three (3) topics from the Solid Waste Division have been accepted and added to the Committee's topic list for 2016-17 including.
 - Values - The floor was open for sharing by staff

SWANA 2016 Safety Awards • Best Safety Innovation • Municipality of East Hants

- Posting new signage at the WMC - site rules (at the entrance) shown above, and site map (2 locations on site).



February

- Toolbox Talk - Equipment Maintenance
- Management toured a local manufacturing facility (with a global customer base), that are award-winning leaders in safety programming, to gather information on their 5S system, and safety culture best practices. Below is a sample photo shown to the team to provide a visual of what we are looking to do in 2016-17.



- Contract Awareness Month (OHS Committee theme) - Manager sent an email out to all 'regular' contractors of the WMC and the team discussing our safety culture and expectations of all workers.

March

- Work Plans 2016-17 Review - planning training and projects to build upon this past year
- Training review for next year - more requests came in, varied topics
- Competition of SOP 2015 review
- Focus safety project 2016-17 - Discussion/Plans:
 - Update Fire Safety Plan for WMC
 - Fire Department Tours of the WMC - relationship building, gather feedback on their needs/wants should an event take place at the WMC
 - Report and make recommendations on suggestions from Fire Departments

Question 5

What were the results of the innovation and how do they compare to the baseline you had established?

There are three (3) specific results achieved this year due to the focus on establishing a Division safety culture.

1. Staff Confidence in Processes

This result was achieved with the quarterly review of specific SOPs and the allowance for discussion and evolution of those SOPs. Staff have stated that they feel more confident that the whole team is aligned to the expectations of working safely and appreciate that at the end of each year all SOPs will be reviewed thoroughly.

2. Improved Compliance at WMC

Review and discussion with contractors and private WMC users related to safety issues has decreased as a result of clear and well-placed signage. We have received positive feedback on the design of the signage. In the case of some regular users of the site they have noted that the new signage caught their attention (because it was new) and that the signage provided them a self-check moment.

3. Improved Relationships with Stakeholders.

The Atlantic Canada Chapter of SWANA coordinated Landfill Fire Training in New Brunswick and Newfoundland in October 2015. The Manager took the opportunity of time between those two sessions to coordinate directly with the trainer, Dr. Tony Sperling for a session in East Hants, for East Hants staff and stakeholders. Due to scheduling and budget there would be limited participation option at the SWANA sessions.

Feedback during the sessions from local Fire Chiefs was a resounding **thank you** for the coordination of the sessions. They indicated that they were unsure what they would learn at the session, due to their existing training and experience, and were very surprised at the knowledge they gained and how different a landfill fire behaves. As a wrap-up to the session there was a high interest in a tour of the Waste Management Centre - many have never been to the location. In addition the Departments are open to participating in a review of our Fire Plan and procedures, which has not been done previously.

Question 6

Why do you think your safety program deserves this innovation award?

The Solid Waste Division in East Hants deserves this innovation award because you need to have a ***culture of safety*** to ensure you have an efficient safety program. While building a culture of safety is not a new concept for many operations it is for our team. Our operation includes 6 employees, and of those 5 employees have been with the Division 12-years plus. In the past 15-years we have had 2 CAOs, 5 Directors, and 3 Managers - these changes in management make consistency in a culture of safety difficult. Over the last 3-years we have achieved a stable

SWANA 2016 Safety Awards • Best Safety Innovation • Municipality of East Hants

management level, and therefore have begun the work to evaluate all our operational activities and services to ensure we are working efficiently, fair, and consistently.

In the past 12-month we have:

- ✓ Achieved engagement of all Division staff on the topic of safety
- ✓ Ensured that our efforts strategically linked to the Organizational Strategy
- ✓ Included action items on our work plans, with targeted dates, and discussed

For a smaller operation the steps we've implemented in the past year, and have included on our future work plans is impressive. We are making smart decisions, being engaged as a team, and our communicating our safety culture with stakeholders.