2017 SAFETY AWARD ENTRY
“BIGGEST SAFETY IMPROVEMENT”
COLLECTION & TRANSFER

Presented by: Municipality of Anchorage
Solid Waste Services
Refuse Collection Utility

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Population: 300,950

“Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t – you’re right,”
Henry Ford

This famous quote emphasizes how much attitude determines success or failure.
Interpreted: Whether you think you’ll be safe on the job or you think you’ll be injured, you’re probably right.

Collection Vehicle
Auto-Sideloader
- Roll Cart Collection
- Residential Recycling
- Residential Refuse
- Fully Automated
- Beautiful Winter Day

Photo: Solid Waste Services Refuse Collection Utility on Residential Route
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Solid Waste Services Safety Program is predicated on four Pillars of Safety: Engagement, Recognition, Communications, and Measurement. We believe that our performance improvement is achieved by incorporating these four pillars as the foundation of our “Culture of Safety.” Our safety culture is our approach and attitude towards workplace safety. Safety is a core value and not just another priority, because priorities can change. Safety responsibility and accountability is a team effort. Everyone plays a role in the success of our safety program. By empowering employees to participate and make decisions, safety becomes a value added attribute and a measurable commitment. The entire team has the same vision for safety. Everyone knows that safety and health is really important at every level of the organization, and that employee’s well-being is what it is all about. Employee’s safety concerns, ideas and suggestions are taken seriously, sometimes implemented, and always rewarded.

Mark W. Spafford, General Manager

The Refuse Collection Utility

The Solid Waste Services (SWS) Refuse Collection Utility (RCU) has five types of services: commercial dumpsters; automated residential roll cart service; residential curbside recycling; bulky waste collection, i.e., furniture and white goods; and can and bag service.

The RCU services over 5,000 dumpsters per week with seven daily dumpster routes, and two Saturday routes to serve its commercial and multi-family residential customers. As a result of an automated trash and recycling collection service that began in the fall of 2007, most SWS residential customers are serviced using automated vehicles and roll carts. In 2017, the final phase of automated collection rollout will be completed and the RCU will be servicing eight automated collection routes with approximately 250 customers remaining on can and bag service. Currently, there is an average of 24,773 roll-carts and 1,977 dumpsters in service. The RCU is maintained in a 27,000 square foot building that also contains vehicle maintenance, warm storage space, and administrative offices and it is located at the Central Transfer Station in Anchorage, Alaska.

In 2015, the SWS RCU implemented an Automated Refuse Route Management System (ARRMS) with up-to-date route information and GPS to make refuse collection operations more efficient and cost effective. This project is still on-going and is expected to be fully operational in 2017. Specifically, this system will provide real-time information to management and customer service staff such as: photo-documented waste containers that are overfull; not placed on curbside, or are out of compliance in some manner; a method for drivers to document extra charges; provide automated communication between refuse collection vehicles and the back office systems; provide updated route information to refuse collection vehicle operators; track vehicle progress on route; integrate with SWS existing billing system; and, provide moving map displays for drivers that show customer and navigation information.
Section 1
Describe your safety program, including your use of Safety Monday and other safety information provided by SWANA.

**Employee Engagement:** This part of our safety program is the most important, because it requires a values based involvement and commitment to our safety program. It is the connection point between employees, their supervisors and the people they interact with in their daily work activities and within our organization. Creating a more engaging environment and making or improving these connections, is absolutely the key element to improving our organization’s safety culture. It provides employees the opportunity to share best practices and work collaboratively for the benefit of all. Because of their direct and daily interaction with employees, managers and supervisors play a critical role in affecting and influencing a positive employee work experience during their workday. This positive relationship in turn supports and sustains the overall success of our organization’s safety program.

**Essential Elements of our Safety Program include:**

- Visible management commitment, effective communication and training to ensure the safety and health of our employees, and environmental protection for our community.
- Recognition by all employees and contractors that safety and environmental protection is a condition of employment and that they are responsible and accountable for their safety and the safety of those around them.
- Management and supervisors are responsible and accountable for safety, health and environmental matters and providing appropriate resources to implement, support and sustain the safety program.
- Integration of safety, health and environmental considerations, including identifying and controlling hazards and risks into our business decisions, plans and operations.
- Compliance with all applicable local, state and federal legislation, regulations and relevant industry standards.
Section 1 – Continued...

Employee Recognition: This is the means by which employees are given credit for their accomplishments and shown appreciation for their efforts. We believe that every employee has a basic right and fundamental need to know that their efforts are not going unnoticed. We understand that the impact of positive praise lasts a long time and recognition of safe work practices is a validation of our employees efforts, a sign of our success, and it gives meaning to all we do. Our goal is to recognize good personal behaviors and safe work practices because this directly impacts how well employees work and how safely they work. Some examples include, NW&RA Driver of the Year, MOA-Employee of the Year, Work Group of the Year, Devin Branham Memorial Safety Award, and Section Specific Safety Vest and Jackets with SWS Logo, Stay Safe-Stay Hydrated! Hydro Flask, and Grilled Steak Day for achieving one year with no Lost Time Accidents.

Employee Communication: Communication with employees is a crucial and an essential part of our safety program. It allows for accurate and timely information to flow throughout the organization. Communicating the organization’s true beliefs about keeping employees safe on the job, particularly in a high hazard industry such as the solid waste industry must be one of our core beliefs. Communication with all employees throughout our organization is a top priority. Daily safety tailgate meetings are used to disseminate and discuss safety topics such as the NW&RA Safety Monday, Safety Stand Down, SWANA News and training opportunities. Monthly safety meetings are held with every division within SWS and gives employees the opportunity to talk about and discuss safety issues. Safety Meetings include mandatory annual OSHA and EPA topics and other subject matter that have come from recommendations made by employees. Safety Councils are held quarterly and include employees, supervisors, union representation and safety management. The safety council brings workers and management together in a cooperative effort to promote safety and health in the work place.

Communication is a key element to the education and training of all employees. Employees are given the opportunity to participate in SWANA certification classes, including Landfill Gas Safety, Manager of Landfill Operations, Manager of Transfer Station Systems, Manager of Recycling Operations, Integrated Solid Waste Management, and many others. Senior Managers and Supervisors actively participate in the local SWANA Chapter meetings and many other professional organizations that also share safe work practices.
Section 2
How do you measure results for your safety program?

SWS trains all employees on accident reporting procedures to ensure that all accidents, including personal injury, vehicle, equipment and property damage, no matter how minor, are reported immediately or as soon as possible to their immediate supervisor. Supervisors are required to report to the accident scene and conduct an accident investigation. All accidents are investigated and accident reports are completed within 48 hours. These accident reports are submitted to the Safety Manager for review and then given to the General Manager for review and approval. All approved reports are scanned and sent to the MOA-Safety and Risk Management Office. All accidents are entered into the electronic data base and logged into the appropriate OSHA log as either a work related injury or illness, or the SWS vehicle, equipment or property damage log. This data base allows for review and analysis by division and for the department as a whole.
All Worker’s Compensation Claims are tracked by MOA-Risk Management, Worker’s Compensation Administrator. This statistical data, including the number of claims, amount paid and the status of each claim, whether open or closed is provided to the SWS General Manager and Safety Manager on a quarterly basis at a minimum. This information is then recorded into our database that tracks the associated cost for each division and the department overall. This data is also used to make comparisons year to year.
SWS Refuse Collection Utility’s actual OSHA 300A Log for calendar year 2015 is used as the performance comparison for the Work Related Injury and Illness measurements. This data indicates that there were 4 Recordable Injury Accidents in 2015.

**OSHA 300A Log – 2015**

- Total Recordable Injuries: 4
- Number of days away: 0
- Number of days Restricted Duty: 0
- Worker’s Compensation Paid – 2015
  - $0.00

**DART Rate – 2015**

- 4.10

**Total Recordable Rate – 2015**

- 16.24
Section 4
How did you measure the safety improvement that you achieved in 2016?

SWS Refuse Collection Utility’s actual OSHA 300A Log for calendar year 2016 is used as the performance comparison for the Work Related Injury and Illness measurements. This data indicates that there were 2 Recordable Injury Accidents in 2016 of which only 1 resulted in days away from work-Lost Time. This represents a 50% reduction in Recordable Accident Rates.

**OSHA 300A Log – 2016**

* Total Recordable Injuries: 2
* Number of days away: 173
* Number of days Restricted Duty: 0

**DART Rate – 2016**

* 4.32

**Total Recordable Rate – 2016**

* 8.12

**Worker’s Compensation Paid – 2016**

* $103,789.00 (1-Injury Accident)
The main reason for our improvement is simple. If you want to improve your safety performance, you don’t need to hire an expensive safety consultant. You need to put away those accident statistics and start listening to the real experts on safety—your employees. The key to achieving excellence in safety performance is organizational accountability and employee involvement.

At SWS we have learned that using measures of performance such as injury frequency and severity rates weren’t very meaningful. As a result, we have concluded that techniques that work for improving quality and productivity are not usable in safety because it’s different. Accidents are a “people problem.” The bottom line is that unsafe acts that are caused by human behavior account for as much as 88% of accidents and unsafe conditions account for only about 10% of accidents. By focusing on unsafe acts and conditions, we end up dealing with accidents on a symptomatic basis rather than a causal basis. Behind every unsafe behavior or unsafe act, there is a reason that people engage in those behaviors. A lot of times, it has to do with the management system, the way people are measured and rewarded, and the lack of a good safety culture within the organization that leads to unsafe behavior as being acceptable.

The essential elements of our safety program are focused around the work environment and the improvement of our safety culture. They include accountability, employee involvement, flexibility to make choices about how results are obtained, and whether or not employees perceive that the safety system is good for them. It’s all about how people feel about their organization that dictates how they behave on the job every day. If we consistently place a high value on safety and make decisions daily that support safety, employees will respond and operate in a safe manner.

Finally, we have set up safety accountability systems for manager and employee work related activities and actions at each level of the organization. We believe that if managers demonstrate to employees that they are serious about safety, they can then go to the employees and ask—will you help us? It’s not about them versus us, it’s a team effort and we are doing this together.

Photo: Solid Waste Services Past Refuse Collection Team
Section 6
Why do you think your safety program deserves this improvement award?

The SWS RCU Team drives and operates Automated Sideloaders and Commercial Frontloaders with a combined 26,683 commercial and residential pickups per week. This is all performed during some extremely severe Alaskan winter weather conditions, including snow storms, blizzard conditions, and extremely icy roads. Alaska winters are long, cold and dark; 6 months of severe cold weather; temperatures down to -30 Degree Fahrenheit; and darkness prevails for over 18 hours of the day at its peak. The RCU Team safely hauls multiple refuse loads everyday, working 8 hour days, 6 days a week, 304 days each year only getting Sundays and 2 holidays off the entire year, Christmas and New Years Day.

Since 2008, when the RCU first began the transition to full automation, we have been keeping data on Worker’s Compensation cost. As you can see from the data below, there have been some high and low costs, from almost a quarter million dollars in 2010 down to zero in 2015.

Yes, there was one injury accident in January 2016 that was very costly, however the trend continues to move in the right direction—Down. We believe that you can’t measure an organizations safety performance by looking at one accident, you must look at the bigger picture. Since the one injury accident in January 2016, the RCU Team has gone over 480 days without a recordable lost time injury related accident. This achievement speaks volumes to their outstanding safety performance and continuous safety improvement.

The RCU has accomplished enormous safety improvements over the last few years. The RCU team is focused on a “Culture of Safety” that demonstrates engaged, empowered and involved employees make an enormous impact on the success of our safety program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workers Comp Losses 2008 - 2016</th>
<th>As of December 31, 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Automated</td>
<td>0 $0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>0 $0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle Maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4 $28,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Time lost incident)</td>
<td>$30,698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MO = Incident required medical attention but no lost time
RO = Incident required no medical attention or lost time

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