Lakeshore Recycling Systems Excels with New Safety Program

SAFETY IS MORE THAN A PRIORITY; IT IS A VALUE

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SWANA ID#: 1252291
Jurisdiction: Chicago Metropolitan Area
Population: 9,500,000
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Serving Chicagoland for nearly 20 years, Lakeshore Recycling Systems (LRS) is the largest privately-held waste company in Illinois. LRS is a comprehensive waste partner that specializes in recycling and waste diversion programs, affordable roll-off container services, portable restroom rentals, mulch distribution, street sweeping, on-site storage options and full-service waste removal solutions for Chicagoland businesses and residential homeowners.

LRS owns and operates seven Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), a fleet of fuel-efficient natural gas-powered trucks and is run by 760 committed full-time employees.

Controlling over 2.3 million tons-per-year, LRS does not own a landfill and is committed to raising awareness for a more environmentally sustainable and scalable business model that fuels the circular economy. As the industry leader in providing innovative and environmentally responsible waste and recycling solutions, LRS’ relentless dedication to safety sets the precedent for other waste haulers. Safety is not a priority, but a core value at LRS.
CRITERIA 1: DESCRIBE YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM, INCLUDING YOUR USE OF SAFETY MONDAY AND OTHER SAFETY INFORMATION PROVIDED BY SWANA.

HISTORY
Before Lakeshore Recycling Systems became the $170 million company it is today, LRS began after a merger between Recycling Systems, Inc. (RSI) and Lakeshore Waste Services (LWS) in January 2013. Both Chicagoland companies possessed a focus on environmental sustainability that is still integrated in the current functions of the company. Both RSI and LWS operated without landfill ownership, a commitment that is still key to this day. Through several strategic acquisitions, LRS now owns and operates over 400 bio-diesel trucks and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles and controls over 32 percent of the Chicagoland footprint.

In the past five years, LRS has subsequently grown into Chicagoland’s largest independent waste diversion and recycling services provider. After the prominent expansion, LRS soon realized that safety needed to expand its role within the organization as a key value within its corporate identity. Before Live Safety, LRS’ previous safety program (though present) did not have a cohesive identity that was easily recognizable. In late 2017, the Live Safety campaign was created to raise awareness of the importance of safety to the men and women under the LRS banner, their families and the Illinois community.

LIVE SAFETY
Live Safety initially started as a campaign meant to educate LRS employees on safety. The campaign has since transitioned into a principle and philosophy that is instilled in the core foundation of LRS. Live Safety focuses on safety being a value to LRS, not just a priority. The thought behind this strategy is that priorities can often change over time but at LRS, safety is something that will remain a critical part of LRS’ core values. The Live Safety philosophy is firmly incorporated into all of LRS’ daily activities as well as our brand identity. The principle continually spreads the message that living safety is what we do when no one is watching.

The goal of Live Safety is to reinforce the fact that safety affects everyone and is a value that impacts every person both at work and on their free time. The Live Safety philosophy focuses on educating all employees, at every level of the organization, their families and the entire Chicagoland community on the importance of living safety.
This philosophy not only educates others but also encourages a lifestyle change for everyone who encounters the message. LRS’ objective is to create a kind of personal culture which instills a lifestyle that chooses safety rather than being told to be safe. Safety has a profound influence on all lives; no matter the profession or location. Self-preservation should not start and stop at the time clock.

This principle is continually reinforced through many of the materials LRS creates to educate employees and the community such as REgenerate, LRS’ quarterly newsletters.

Additionally, marketing materials and flyers reiterate the significance of safety and informs the audience of the Live Safety philosophy. The newsletters acknowledge employees that keep safety at the forefront of all of their actions and also reminds customers and employees of the influence living with safety at the top of mind has on their lives.

The televisions throughout LRS’ seven facilities in high foot traffic areas continually showcase images and messages about safety to reinforce the Live Safety message to employees and customers as well as give tips on how to stay safe. These tips are often beneficial to safety regarding weather, driving, holidays and many other aspects of life that everyone experiences.

LRS incorporates the families of employees as well into the Live Safety principle by mailing monthly safety postcards to their homes with statistics and tips that can impact everyone on how to be safe for the month.

Reaching out to the families of employees is crucial because it reminds LRS employees that their safety efforts impact more than just themselves. To get families involved, LRS has sent out Live Safety wristbands to the homes of all employees as an introduction to the Live Safety philosophy with a challenge to families to encourage their loved ones to Live Safety. The bands display the message “Family is why I Live Safety” to reinforce the message of the principle to anyone who wears or sees the wristband.
SOCIAL MEDIA

LRS not only mails items to the families of employees but also encourages and promotes continuous interaction on social media. Social media assists the company in communicating the message of the Live Safety philosophy more effectively, in order to inform LRS’ growing communities and workforce. In the last three years, LRS’ employee count has nearly doubled from 400 employees in 2015 to 760 employees in 2018. With this growth and service area expansion, communicating the value of safety has grown tremendously.

On LRS’ Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+, Sundays are “Safety Sundays,” which allows LRS to educate the public on statistics and tips that they may not know.

Each month has a theme regarding safety. In following that theme, each Sunday during that month has a post with the purpose of educating the public on facts and tips based on that specific safety topic. Many of these topics align with SWANA’s Safety Monday tips, which is reviewed weekly by LRS’ safety operations and marketing teams to discuss how to share this crucial information.

On Mondays, LRS also acknowledges employees that practice safety at work. Each employee selected is a model of safety. They have followed all of the safety procedures that are established by LRS and is an employee that sets the example for others. They are recognized on all of LRS’ social media pages as the LRS highlight for the week.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

LRS also enforces safety through all of its business practices. Starting with the cross-training of employees to ensure that they are fully-equipped and prepared for different operations. The new employees who work in these fields start out by receiving the appropriate training for their jobs and then shadowing an experienced employee who trains and coaches all relevant processes and procedures.

Managers and supervisors also receive training in order to ensure that they are leading by example and are up-to-date on all safety protocols. Each supervisor is a safety champion and are required to report any and all incidents that they see. Putting every incident through an electronic report form converts the information into metrics that are later used to identify areas of focus.

Every manager, driver and line worker is involved in a daily job brief and Monday morning group review of Safety Monday. Each line of business does a monthly safety meeting that involves a compliance topic, incident review, industry trends, company trends and an open discussion forum. All of the managers on the post-collection side meet quarterly to review observations, trends, asset management and best practice discussion.
Two-way communication is important to LRS as it promotes teamwork and encourages everyone to work together for a common goal, which is reducing the total number of incidents the company has and keeping all employees and the public safe. LRS gave the drivers and line workers the opportunity to complete a survey on their knowledge of the safety initiatives LRS has done thus far, to see where communication or safety protocols can be enhanced. The drivers and line workers also had the chance to give their feedback on how to improve LRS’ safety procedures. LRS plans to do a follow-up survey in June and December.

Along with safety meetings and different forms of two-way communication, Drive Cams have also been added into approximately 50% of LRS’ trucks to ensure safety while drivers are on the road. There is complete transparency and honesty with the drivers on how the Drive Cams are monitored and how they work to assure that all employees have the same understanding. The purpose of the Drive Cams is to ultimately reduce accidents while drivers are working. The cameras are used to coach any drivers through areas of potential improvement and provide valuable information in event of an incident.

To act as a constant reminder, the Live Safety logo decal is on every truck on the drive-side window. SWANA's Slow Down to Get Around decal is on the outside of every truck in order to remind other motorists to stay alert and drive safely when near LRS’ trucks. These decals help both the drivers and the general public remember to practice safety while driving in order to protect themselves and others. Each driver was also given a card that explained what to do in case of a vehicle incident to ensure that they know how to respond in the event of an emergency situation.

While the job functions of all office employees are usually associated with less risk, LRS’ Live Safety efforts includes educating employees with tips that relate to both their jobs at LRS and their daily lives. Each employee receives monthly safety information through emails, flyers, Live Safety promotional items, such as water bottles, notebooks and wristbands, and the monthly safety card is mailed to their homes.

Upon being hired, new employees receive a welcome kit which includes safety items to set the tone for this critical aspect of LRS’ foundation. These initiatives foster conversation among the employees and their families to live safety.

To ensure that these initiatives are not only received by employees in the field, LRS has included all office managers on the incident report distribution, as well as starting every meeting in the organization with a brief safety discussion and constant stream of communication from the safety team.

LRS constantly uses the information SWANA distributes; such as Safety Mondays, Slow Down to Get Around and 5 to Stay Alive, to remind employees about relevant safety topics while doing their jobs. All LRS drivers utilize SWANA's 5 to Stay Alive tips every day while working to keep themselves and others safe. LRS stays up-to-date with the safety initiatives SWANA does because it is crucial to keep all employees informed and educated on safety at work.
One of the many ways LRS measures the results of the Live Safety efforts is by creating monthly safety dashboards. The dashboards showcase the cost incurred by line of business, total incidents by severity and total incident rates by line of business.

All seven of LRS’ facilities present the dashboards on every television to continue the transparency between all employees. Tracking the amount and types of incidents that occur makes it easier to find incident trends in different lines of business and allows our safety operations team to provide efficient solutions.

Every employee reports every incident that occurs, no matter the severity. This approach does several things: communicates all incidents across the organization, educates among all lines of business and creates an information database to produce metrics and analytics.

Data is the key to forecasting. It creates metrics to help focus efforts across the organization. In quarter two of 2017, LRS started implementing the dashboards and used the data from the electronic report form to convert the information into easily readable graphs for all employees. At the start of quarter four, the dashboards were added to the Live Safety initiative and communicated throughout all of LRS’ facilities. From the end of quarter three to the end of quarter four, the total number of incidents dropped by nearly 20 incidents. After the introduction to the safety dashboards, incidents have continuously reduced. The dashboards assist LRS with the goal of reducing incident reports to below 20 incidents by the end of 2018.
Before hiring LRS’ Vice President of Risk Management, John Sliwicki, in June 2016 there was very limited tracked incident data. After Sliwicki’s arrival, the dedication to safety and tracking incidents increased tremendously.

In 2016, LRS was only tracking OSHA recordable rates, Days Away, Restrictions and Transfers Rates (DART) and Experience Modification Rates (EMR).

With the introduction of the electronic report form, LRS can now track all incidents with specification in severity, type, location, line of business, supervisor and employee. Due to safety leaders reporting every incident, LRS has seen great improvement with safety within the organization.

The incident rates and claim cost per hour is the baseline in which LRS has determined improvement between 2016 and 2017.
CRITERIA 4: HOW DID YOU MEASURE THE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT THAT YOU ACHIEVED IN 2017? (QUANTIFY REDUCTION IN ONE OR MORE METRICS IDENTIFIED IN QUESTION 3.)

As a result of every incident being reported, LRS’ safety culture has greatly improved and the cost of insurance claim per hour has decreased. Comparing the quantifiable reduction in the total incident rates (TIR) and claim cost per hour from 2016 to 2017 is how LRS measured improvement over the year.

![Yearly Comparison Graph]

![Incident Comparison Graph]
CRITERIA 5: TO WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE THE IMPROVEMENT IN YOUR SAFETY PERFORMANCE IN 2017?

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency between all facets of the company with regard to safety is one of the many attributes of the Live Safety philosophy that has improved LRS’ safety initiatives. Having each of the 760 employees, their family members and the rest of the public understand why safety is important is crucial to the success of the LRS safety initiative.

With the transparency of all of LRS’ safety efforts, education is the key to its success. There is education among all employees along with customers and the general public through social media and mailing out flyers.

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Encouraging two-way communication between all employees fosters new ways to incorporate safety into LRS’ business practices. Drivers, line workers, supervisors and management can all be on the same page and better the Live Safety philosophy through two-way communication.

All drivers and line workers were encouraged to fill out a survey that allowed them to tell the management team what they thought about the safety initiatives LRS has done thus far and to give their own feedback on how to improve the safety initiatives within the organization.

There were also many one-on-one conversations with the Managing Partners, CEO, managers, drivers and line workers to get an all-encompassing understanding on the different needs and wants from all positions in the company. These conversations led to new ideas on how to all achieve the same goal with reducing the number of incidents the company has and to keep everyone safe.
**COOPERATION AND RESPONSIBILITY**

The responsibility of supervisors, drivers and line workers to report every incident is important to the performance of LRS’ safety efforts. For example, LRS used the incident report data to identify a potential deficiency with its hand protection. Subsequently, we conducted a job hazard analysis based on the data, which led to new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) gloves for drivers and line workers. Without the cooperation and responsibility of all LRS employees the data would have been skewed and there would not have been a solution for the common problem among our employees.

A new responsibility that LRS incorporated was post-offer, pre-employment physicals given to potential employees to ensure that LRS is hiring people who can handle the rigor of the job, in order to keep the community and others safe.

All members of the LRS team are held responsible for their actions and recording the incidents that occur are part of their responsibilities. The accountability and cooperation of each employee is integral in the performance of the Live Safety principle.

**INCIDENT REPORTS AND AUDITS**

Before Sliwicki, LRS’ did not conduct audits and observations were reported on a very minimal basis. While incident reports were taken, the data collected was not used to forecast or trend. The commitment to recording incidents and performing regular safety audits needed to increase due to how rapidly the company was growing. By establishing a true devotion to tracking incident reports and orchestrating weekly audits, LRS is able to create comprehensive safety reviews and further protect employees and the Illinois community.
CRITERIA 6: WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM DESERVES THIS IMPROVEMENT AWARD?

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT
LRS not only wants its employees to live safety but their families, friends and the general public as well. Through communication and education, LRS spreads the message of the Live Safety philosophy in its facilities and to Chicagoland. The waste industry can be very dangerous and the Live Safety ideology was created to help LRS employees realize that being safe impacts more than just themselves but their coworkers, families and the public.

To drive this message home to all of LRS’ employees, LRS sent multiple Live Safety bracelets to all employee households in order to get every family member knowledgeable and on board with the campaign as well. Monthly safety cards, that are dispersed around every facility and the messages are on all of the facility televisions, are also mailed to every employee household with safety facts and tips.

The Chicagoland community gets the same information as well through social media. LRS’ social media pages focus on educating the general public on the waste and recycling industry and adds a great deal of information on the importance of safety to the content.

When the employees are all united under the LRS banner and work together to improve LRS’ safety culture, there is a ripple effect of change in how safety is incorporated into day-to-day life.

MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT
The full cooperation and dedication from all managers is an essential part of the Live Safety philosophy’s success, thus far. Having the leaders of the company set the precedent and show each employee, across all levels, why safety matters is truly a key factor in the implementation of this principle. Without the managers leading by example, the message of the ideology would not have the full commitment of each employee.

Approaching the communication from a top down standpoint ensures that every employee understands the importance of safety and how to incorporate this into their everyday lives.

LIVE SAFETY
Live Safety is more than just a safety program or campaign, but a lifestyle change. Improving your own personal safety culture incites others to do the same. Safety is a value that should matter to everyone at all times. The mission of the principle is to educate others on why safety is essential, as well as motivate them to be mindful of their daily habits. This ensure that safety is not just a priority but a core value.

Once every person keeps safety at the top of their mind on a regular basis, without being told to do so, the world will be a better and safer place. And this is why LRS believes in the importance to Live Safety.