

SAFE WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICES

This guidance has been developed by the Waste Industry Health and Safety (WISH) Forum to help control safety and health risks in the waste management industry associated with safe waste and recycling collection services. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was consulted in the production of this publication. It endorses the sensible, proportionate, reasonable and balanced advice to owners on managing the risk from this guidance during the waste-related activities as set out in the guidance.

Waste and recycling collection services activities account for the largest proportion of accidents in the waste and recycling industry. This guidance is about managing risks from collection services activities. It includes information on how to assess and control the main risks and provides advice on managing 'task and finish' (T&F) practices, where applicable. The guidance is aimed at clients in control of contracts, those who specify contracts and employers who operate the services. It will also help managers and supervisors who design and operate collection services.

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1. Introduction

This guidance is intended primarily for household (municipal) collection services, but the principles can be applied to all waste and recycling collection services, including commercial/trade collection services.

The guidance is aimed at clients in control of contracts, those who specify contracts and employers who operate the waste and recycling collection services. It will also help managers and supervisors design/operate collection services so that acceptable levels of safety are achieved and maintained.

Collection activities account for the largest proportion of accidents in the waste and recycling industries. Operating a vehicle-based collection service has the potential to expose collection crews, other road users and pedestrians to a range of hazards. This guidance identifies the main hazards during vehicle operation. It describes reasonably practicable measures for controlling the risks those hazards generate and mitigating the risks that may be outside the operator's control (for an explanation of 'so far as is reasonably practicable', see www.hse.gov.uk/risk/theory/alarplance.htm).

This information sheet provides additional advice on reducing the risks associated with work on the highway. Duty holders, including employers, drivers and collection crews should also take account of other relevant regulatory requirements, particularly road traffic legislation and the standards set out in the Highway Code.

2. Managing waste and recycling collection services risks

Waste and recycling collection services can be operated by the public, private and community sectors. They may be contracted out by local authorities and public/private waste producers. Whichever system is in operation, clients and contractors each have duties to ensure that the service is suitable and safe, before and during the life of the contract.

Collection services operate in environments and circumstances that are diverse and change rapidly. Defining prescriptive rules is not appropriate or effective given the range of circumstances that can occur, but by identifying hazards and assessing risks, it is possible to introduce control strategies that will significantly reduce the risk of injury.

Similar hazards are found throughout collection services, enabling assessments and control measures to be made at a generic level. However, some hazards will be specific to individual locations and environments. These need to be identified, assessed, controlled and communicated on a case-by-case basis. Examples of risk control measures for specific hazards are outlined in Appendix 1.

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Further information on sensible risk management can be found at:

- www.hse.gov.uk/risk/principles.htm
- www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/manage.htm
- www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm

If properly managed and controlled, 'Task and finish' (T&F) practices, where applicable, should not adversely impact on the health and safety of collection services. Appendix 2 advises how to manage such T&F practices.

2.1 Designing the service

Local authorities operating their own collection service should take account of the health, safety and welfare of collection crews and others at the initial design stage. This includes identifying and deciding how to control the risks. Important aspects to consider include:

- The collection process, collection bins/bags etc and collection areas (ie rural, high-rise, dense urban etc)
- The overall collection route
- The size and specification of collection vehicles in relation to the geography, street layout and width of roads, such as rural lanes
- Eliminating or reducing the need to reverse
- Tailoring collection services within certain time restrictions to minimise the number of pedestrians in the area during the collection process
- Collection crews' exposure to noise and the requirement for adequate hearing protection, particularly in glass collection
- The competence of collection crews (eg waste industry NVQs)
- The ability to alter contracts during their life to reflect changes in legislation, improvements in vehicle standards and industry practice
- Determining whether single or double-sided collection methods
- Provide the safer option, so far as is reasonably practicable (see Appendix 1)

The systems and arrangements adopted should be kept under review and will need to be amended from time to time in the light of experience.

2.2 Tendering process

At the pre-tender stage of a contract, clients are accountable for the impact their approach has on the health and safety of those working on, or affected by, the collection activities.

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Local authorities and others who contract out services should ensure that the systems they specify and the tenders received make suitable allowance for managing for health and safety and that the considerations listed above are included.

Tender assessment should include health and safety. Those assessing tenders should ensure:

- Suitable and sufficient information about the collection service is supplied
- The collection system design takes account of the reasonably foreseeable hazards and minimises the risks to which all those involved can be exposed
- Operational team are competent, have clearly defined information, instruction and training
- Time, money and other resources are available to run the contract efficiently and safely

At the appointment stage (awarding the contract), the partnership arrangements should include a robust framework for monitoring and reviewing the health and safety of the collection service. In particular, the following processes should be covered:

- Establishing a contract safety review committee with representatives from the client, the contractor and other parties affected by the contract
- Devising a monitoring process, either independently or in conjunction with the appointed contractor, to ensure that those engaged in the contract are actually working to prescribed methods and to review the suitability of the working method
- Formally auditing the health, safety and welfare standards of the appointed contractor or other person responsible for the collection service periodical
- Recognising additional resources may be required by the service providers during mobilisation to ensure that dynamic risks are addressed

For further information on procuring, managing and monitoring waste services visit www.hse.gov.uk/waste/services/index.htm .

3. Assessing collection route risks

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers and self-employed people to suitably and sufficiently assess and control the risks their activities present to their employees and others. The assessment should identify:

- The hazards that can cause harm, what kind of harm and how likely it is to happen
- Who is at risk (such as workers, contractors, subcontractors, agency or temporary workers, members of the public or visitors)
- The appropriate control measures needed to eliminate or reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable

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Risk assessment is about identifying and taking sensible and proportionate measures to control the risks in your workplace, not creating huge amounts of paperwork.

In assessing collection route risks you should think about:

- The effect of strategic decisions, such as choice of vehicle design, receptacle type and material-specific issues (eg noise and glass collections)
- Common (generic) issues such as manual handling, slips and trips, violence to staff, dealing with hung-up bins and sharps across your collection activities. Advice on controlling the most common hazards can be found in The health and safety toolbox: How to control risks at work
- Route and location-specific hazards, such as: reversing, single side or double side collection, high-risk pedestrianised areas (eg schools), low overhead cables, staircases/steps, poor lighting and aggressive dogs
- The ability and authority of drivers and collection staff to react to changing (dynamic) conditions, taking action to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others. Examples may include changing weather conditions, temporary road works and mechanical breakdowns. Crews will need to be adequately trained to respond to such circumstances, or identify the need to seek advice before proceeding

Your risk assessment should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the control measures remain effective. The impact of changes to service arrangements made during the course of the contract/service term should also be assessed before and during implementation.

For further information about assessing risks, visit www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm

3.1 Collection route hazards

Anyone carrying out hazard identification should have the knowledge, experience and ability to do so and understand the route from the perspective of a driver, collection worker and other road/footpath user. Drivers, collection staff, managers and clients should be consulted to help ensure that hazards are identified.

Permanent hazards should be recognised and controlled as part of the crew's formal instructions. Some permanent hazards may be variable due to changing conditions and other hazards may recur frequently or appear only occasionally and some hazards can be quite unpredictable, especially weather effects.

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Table. Route hazard examples

Permanent hazards	Permanent but variable hazards	Frequent and variable hazards	Occasional hazards	Unpredictable hazards
Blind bends	Schools	Reversing	Working/crossing on the highway	High winds/rain
Overheads	Community centres	Rush Hour traffic	Crossing a highway	Snow/ice/mud
Road width	Road speed and usage	Roads works	Construction sites	Local flooding
Inclines and adverse cambers	Pedestrian areas	Parked cars	School holidays	Poor visibility – fog etc
Concealed entrances	Loose/poor surfaces			
Poor visibilities due to features etc				

3.2 Those at risk of harm

Apart from drivers and collection staff, pedestrians and other road users are at risk. Consider the unexpected or the unusual. For instance, those who may not be able to appreciate danger or be able to take appropriate action (such as the elderly, very young or disabled) and during school holidays there are likely to be children playing outdoors.

Potential results of poor collection route planning - collection took place during the morning rush hour on a busy, suburban 'rat run' with double-parked cars in a residential street. This resulted in gridlocked traffic, angry road users, parked cars obstructing carriage of waste/recycling containers to the vehicle, very slow collection times and commuters attempting to weave past the collection vehicle as the collection crew worked in the road. Scheduling collection points and good route planning between points is critical. If route optimisation software has been used in the collection round design, it is important to ensure that known problems, including the desirable timing of collection, one-way streets, low bridges and traffic patterns, have been fully integrated and properly prioritised.

4. Control measures

Determine what sensible measures are required to deal with the risks identified. The following approaches should be considered:

- Can hazard be eliminated altogether (eg removing the need to reverse or the flow of traffic)?
- If not, how can the risks be controlled (eg carrying out the task at a less busy time of day)?
- Taking into account the control measures above, have the risks been reduced to a reasonably practicable minimum?

See Appendices 1 and 2 for examples of controls.

Controls for waste and recycling collection services should address four key areas:

- Crew competence
- Vehicle safety
- Safe procedures
- Safe environment

4.1 Crew competence

Drivers/collection crews, including relief/agency workers, new/existing staff, and those in supervision and management, should be competent to work safely in the street collection environment. Training can provide the foundations of competence, but it does not necessarily result in a competent worker.

All crew must be trained in the safe systems of work, specific collection services and agreed manoeuvring signals. Records of training should be kept. The effectiveness of training should be reviewed and its implementation actively monitored to ensure the training provided is relevant and effective in helping develop competent staff.

Competence in waste collection involves:

- Carrying out collection activities safely and efficiently
- Recognising dangers, and putting into practice the risk control measures
- Reacting appropriately to unplanned events and conditions
- Understanding the consequences of not doing something as well as doing it

Crews should be able to identify hazards and take appropriate action, as they will often encounter new circumstances and unplanned/unknown hazards. This is an essential part of the day-to-day management of safety in collection services when there are changed circumstances, such as minor road works, other vehicles poorly parked (eg removal lorries) etc.

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Drivers are expected to use their professional judgement at all times but must contact the depot if they are unsure how to proceed. Any additional controls should be within an agreed framework of guidance. For example, drivers could decide not to collect/proceed in a particular situation if there are unexpectedly high numbers of pedestrians or vehicle movements in a certain area.

Pre-employment assessment is recommended to help ensure staff are competent to undertake the tasks required.

LGV Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) training will assist individuals to maintain a level of competence.

For further information on competence, visit www.hse.gov.uk/competence/index. Further specific guidance on training drivers and crews can be found on the WISH web site

4.2 Vehicle safety

Choosing the right vehicle for each route is essential. For example smaller vehicles will be better suited to narrow lanes and some modern estates. Waste and recycling collection service organisations should work with clients, vehicle manufacturers and suppliers and seek the views of collection crews to improve vehicle specifications. Further advice is available in Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection.

4.3 Safe procedures

Safe systems of work should be designed that eliminate or reduce exposure to risk, so far as is reasonably practicable. See Appendix 1 for examples of control measures that can be applied to specific hazards and can form part of a safe system of work. See also Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection for guidance on safe procedures for reversing and single/double-sided collection.

4.4 Safe environment

Collection organisations usually do not have direct control over the environment in which they operate. Therefore steps should be taken to work with clients, other duty holders and organisations to ensure the safety of crews, road users and pedestrians. These steps may include short-term (eg a car towed away) or longer-term (eg working with planners on a housing estate layout). For example:

- Work with planners to reduce the need for reversing and build in turning circles and roads that are wide enough
- Work with other departments to co-ordinate LGV access (eg mobile libraries, road works)
- Consult highways departments over speed limits, one-way systems and no parking zones

- Advise highways departments when surface conditions deteriorate (eg potholes) or pavements are in poor condition
- Work with enforcement authorities where illegal parking affects safe access
- Provide clear advice to householders on where to place bins, bags, boxes etc

5. Communicating the risks and control measures

The identified risks and control measures devised can only be effectively implemented if they are properly communicated to drivers and collection staff. Details of routes and specific control measures can be complex and lengthy, so robust channels of communication should be put in place.

Control measures for issues common across the collection activity (eg manual handling, slips/trips, violence to staff) may be communicated to collection staff in instructions and training. Crews should be given route maps and clear, unambiguous route specific instructions and other relevant information.

For route-specific issues, clear, unambiguous route-specific instructions and other information about control measures can be communicated to drivers and staff on daily route cards, maps or other route information systems within the vehicle. Route cards/sheets are already widely used to provide staff with details of 'assisted collections' and 'previously missed bins'.

It is recommended that this data is displayed on in-cab devices, such as satellite navigation/route information systems. This ensures that drivers and staff new to a round will have clear instructions and can be given other important information about assisted and trade collections and missed bins etc. See Appendix 3 for an example route sheet.

6. Supervision, monitoring and review

Effective supervision and monitoring arrangements for crews and individual workers should be in place to ensure that:

- Training has been effective
- Risk control measures are being followed
- The controls are effective

Supervision and monitoring should be routine parts of normal work activities for managers and supervisors. The level of supervision and monitoring should be based on:

- The risks associated with the job
- The level of competence and experience of the collection crew
- Whether an employee works as part of a team or is a lone worker

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Supervisors with an appropriate, positive approach to health, safety and welfare can have a significant influence in disseminating and maintaining a high standard of health and safety in the teams they have contact with. All levels of the management chain (including crew leaders) have a vital role to play in setting an example and in promoting and enforcing safe working practices. Avoid 'turning a blind eye'.

Other key considerations:

- The job role of 'on-the-street' supervisors should include health and safety supervision duties – this role should be properly understood and supervisors trained accordingly
- All layers of management should be made aware of the importance of leading by example and of making sure that the working environment positively encourages poor practices to be identified and rectified
- Monitor and review policies and procedures regularly to ensure that what should happen does happen – pay particular attention to the role of individuals in the management chain, from senior executives to those at risk
- Records of monitoring should be kept to help the periodic reviews. An example of a monitoring checklist is given in Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection

For further information on monitoring and reviewing as part of managing for health and safety, visit www.hse.gov.uk/managing/index.htm.

7. Worker consultation and engagement

Involving and consulting your workers is essential in ensuring safe working practices in waste and recycling activities. Further information on worker involvement is available at www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/index.htm and in the HSE leaflet - Consulting employees on health and safety: A brief guide to the law.

8. Accidents, incidents and near hits/near misses

All employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises have duties under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). You must report certain work-related injuries, cases of ill health and dangerous occurrences. See www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/ and Reporting accidents and incidents at work.

Important lessons may be learned from thoroughly investigating accidents and near misses, not least to prevent recurrence. A system for gathering, investigating, analysing and recording accident and near-miss information should be established.

9. Further reading and information

The Highway Code Department for Transport www.gov.uk/highwaycode

The health and safety toolbox: How to control risks at work HSG268 HSE Books 2013 ISBN 978 0 7176 6447 4 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg268.htm Microsite: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox

Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection WISH WASTE 04

Health and safety training: Guidelines for waste management and recycling sector WISH WASTE 21

Consulting employees on health and safety: A brief guide to the law Leaflet INDG232(rev2) HSE Books 2013 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg232.htm

Reporting accidents and incidents at work: A brief guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) Leaflet INDG453(rev1) HSE Books 2013 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg453.htm

The safe use of refuse collection vehicle hoists and bins WISH WASTE 05

Reducing noise risks from 'kerbside' glass collection WISH WASTE 16

Pinder, Dr A Manual handling in refuse collection Health and Safety Laboratory report HSL/2002/21 www.hse.gov.uk/research/hsl

Pinder, Dr A Manual handling in kerbside collection and sorting of recyclables Health and Safety Laboratory report HSL/2006/25 www.hse.gov.uk/research/hsl

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The Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum exists to communicate and consult with key stakeholders, including local and national government bodies, equipment manufacturers, trade associations, professional associations and trade unions. The aim of WISH is to identify, devise and promote activities that can improve industry health and safety performance.

Further information

This guidance is issued by the Waste Industry Health and Safety (WISH) Forum to help control the safety and health risks associated with use of skips and containers. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance. Some parts of the guidance represent good practice and may go further than the minimum you need to do to comply with the law.

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Appendix 1: Control measures for specific hazards

These are examples of risk control measures for specific hazards. They are not exhaustive and control measures relevant to the specific circumstances encountered in individual collection services should be identified.

1. Single/double-sided working

Collection workers may cross the flow of traffic several hundred times a day, exposing them to the risk of being struck by moving vehicles. Where vehicles capable of causing injury to pedestrians can pass the collection vehicle on the carriageway, a single-sided collection would normally be appropriate.

Double-sided working may be appropriate where the design of the collection route ensures that the overall risks are not significantly greater than those from single-sided working.

When deciding between single or double-sided collection, the following factors (among others) should be considered:

- Width of the road
- Speed limit and actual speed of traffic
- The number and size of vehicles using the road
- Defensive positioning of vehicle (Note: compliance with relevant road traffic law and the Highway Code must take priority)
- Congestion caused by the collection vehicle
- Vulnerable locations (schools, care homes etc)
- Housing density
- Distance loads have to be moved
- Visibility and distances to bends
- Street parking and offloading of goods vehicles
- Previous accidents, incidents, near hits/misses
- Whether slave bins are being used

It is also important to ensure the following, so far as is reasonably practicable (see www.hse.gov.uk/risk/theory/alarplance.htm):

- Rounds/vehicles should be designed to ensure that vehicles are loaded from the kerbside/nearside or rear (when stationed against the kerb and in direction of flow of traffic)
- Routes and methods of collection should be designed and operated to eliminate or reduce the need for collection workers to cross the flow of traffic – walkthrough cabs can reduce the need for drivers to exit a vehicle into the flow of traffic

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- Rounds should be designed and vehicles selected to ensure that collection workers get in and out of cabs and working areas on the kerbside/nearside and not into the flow of traffic

Training for all collection workers, including drivers, should highlight the hazards and clearly define the precautions to take if there are no alternatives to getting in or out of a vehicle into the flow of traffic.

It is important to remember that reducing/eliminating one risk may generate others (such as additional vehicle reversing or increased carrying distances), so they should not be considered in isolation.

2. Off-side (driver's side) collection

In some circumstances it may be safer to collect on the off-side of the collection vehicle, eg in:

- A one-way street where properties are on the off-side and the collection vehicle is able to stop on that side of the road
- A multi-lane, one-way street in which crossing live traffic can be avoided by two passes, one on the nearside, one on the off-side
- Narrow roads where properties are on the driver's side, and other vehicles cannot pass
- Roads where properties are on the driver's side and unavoidable vehicle positioning in the road does not allow other vehicles to pass

3. High-risk areas (eg schools, community centres, shopping areas)

Hazard: Vehicle collision with pedestrians, including vulnerable people (children, elderly, visual/hearing impaired etc).

Control measures: Could include

- Plan routes to avoid times of pedestrian activity (eg school opening and closing times).
- Liaise with the site owner to position the collection point in a safe position and/or collect at quiet times.
- Identify high-risk areas on route cards/maps.
- Access pedestrianised areas, such as shopping areas, during quiet hours.
- Use reversing assistants (see Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection).
- Make the crew aware of how children and other vulnerable people behave.
- Ensure staff are aware of school holiday dates, carnivals etc, and the need for added vigilance.

4. Reversing

Hazard: Collision with vehicles, pedestrians and property (reversing causes a disproportionately large number of moving vehicle accidents in the waste/recycling industry).

Control measures: Could include

- Route planning to eliminate/reduce reversing
- Safe systems of work adopted for reversing activities, including using reversing assistants as appropriate
- For extensive advice on the control measures for reversing, see Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection

5. Working in/adjacent to the highway and crossing the highway

Hazard: Collection staff struck by collection vehicle and other road users.

Control measures: Could include

- Reduce risk by collecting from nearside so far as is reasonably practicable; other risks must be taken into account to ensure that the risks are reduced and not transferred
- Select vehicles and have procedures that reduce the need to work close to the flow of traffic, or access/exit the cab into the flow of traffic
- Identify roads where single/double-sided collection is appropriate on the route card/map, (eg one-way streets, heavily trafficked routes or streets where the collection vehicle unavoidably blocks the traffic flow). Where necessary consider whether congestion and traffic building up behind a collection vehicle may be increased or decreased by single-sided collection
- Wear high-visibility clothing with reflective material
- If hearing protection is required (eg during glass collection), ensure it is appropriate and removed when not required

6. Loose/poor surfaces (eg potholes/gravel/mud, grass banks, verges)

Hazard: Loss of traction, reduced braking action, damage to vehicle, slips and trips.

Control measures: Could include

- Identify on route plan where a situation is permanent, eg a site entrance
- Drive at speeds appropriate to the conditions
- Wear footwear with good grip and ankle support

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- When on foot, avoid taking shortcuts across loose or slippery surfaces such as grass or mud
- Report potholes, loose surfaces and mud on road to highways department or site owner
- Ensure that the chosen collection point is the safest available

7. Concealed entrances

Hazard: Collision with plant, vehicles and pedestrians.

Control measures: Could include

- Identify on route plan
- Use reversing assistants (see Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection)
- Position the vehicle to provide impact protection for collection staff (Note: maintain compliance with the relevant Road Traffic law)
- Investigate whether improvements can be made with the highways department or site owner

8. Blind bends

Hazard: Collision with other vehicles and pedestrians, overturning.

Control measures: Could include

- Identify on route plan
- Position vehicle to provide impact protection for collection staff (Note: compliance with relevant Road Traffic law)
- Position a look-out in a safe position on the apex of the bend to warn crew of approaching vehicles, and/or to warn approaching vehicles
- Drive at speeds appropriate to conditions
- Single-sided working

10. Access and congestion (eg parked cars, rush hours, narrow lanes)

Hazard: Collision with vehicles, plant and pedestrians.

Control measures: Could include

- Avoid congested areas by careful timing
- Select vehicles appropriate to road width and foreseeable conditions
- Ensure drivers are aware of the location of passing and turning points on narrow lanes
- Use reversing assistants

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- Consider whether congestion and traffic building up behind a collection vehicle may be increased or decreased by single-sided collection, where appropriate
- Report illegal parking to depot (they should forward report on to the appropriate authorities)
- Train staff to handle aggressive behaviour appropriately

11. Poor visibility

Hazard: Collision with vehicles and pedestrians.

Control measures: Could include

- Drive at speeds appropriate to the conditions
- Use vehicle and working lights
- Staff to wear high-visibility clothing with reflective material built in
- Use reversing assistants
- Report damaged and poor lighting to the depot (they should forward the report to the appropriate authorities)

11. Overhead obstructions (bridges, overhanging branches, power lines)

Hazard: Vehicle collision and electrocution.

Control measures: Could include

- Identify low bridges and other obstructions that prevent vehicle access
- Ensure collection staff have training and instruction in positioning vehicles to avoid overhead obstructions, eg during the operation of bin lifts and trough lifts
- Display the height of the vehicle in the cab
- Report new obstructions the depot (they should forward the report to the relevant authority)

12. Road/street works (long-term)

Hazard: Collision with vehicles and pedestrians, slips/trips and falls.

Control measures: Could include

- Determine the duration of road/street work activities with clients, local authorities and/or utility companies
- Re-route if necessary
- Identify significant road/street works on route cards/maps

Appendix 2: Managing Task & Finish practices

Task & Finish (T&F) practices are not necessarily dangerous or unsafe. However, in collecting municipal waste, material for recycling and in closely related activities (such as street cleaning), practising T&F has the potential to adversely affect the health and safety of workers. Quantifiable evidence of the impact of T&F on operational safety is not available. However, there is anecdotal evidence that, when not properly managed, T&F may encourage workers to rush the job and take potentially dangerous short cuts.

T&F operations can be as safe as non T&F operations when appropriate control measures are provided, used and maintained, but they are likely to require more management and supervisory control. Therefore, the potential impact of T&F practices, if applicable, on the health and safety of collection services should be taken into account.

1. Assessing risks

Where operations take place within a T&F framework, assessment should consider the potential effects of T&F. Identify the controls necessary to ensure that the system operates safely. Identify and implement appropriate and specific control measures.

2. General management issues

For advice on management issues, see HSE's website on managing for health and safety at www.hse.gov.uk/managing/index.htm . General practices that should be considered when managing T&F activities include:

- Communicating and consulting with collection crews so that working practices can be designed to ensure their health and safety – if change is necessary staff and their representatives should be given the opportunity to contribute
- Day-to-day communication with crews during their working day is important – establish effective radio, mobile phone or other means of electronic communication
- Designing collection rounds to eliminate or minimise running, loading into moving vehicles and the need to take shortcuts across grassy banks and slippery or uneven surfaces
- Monitoring start and finish times for collection crews so that workloads can be evenly distributed between collection rounds and emerging poor practice can be identified and investigated
- Monitoring accident rates, particularly minor road accidents and slips, trips and falls;
- Monitoring vehicle payloads/tipping weights, particularly where seasonal changes are expected

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- Encouraging drivers and collection operatives to take regular breaks to recuperate and replenish themselves
- Monitoring breaks taken through tachograph and other similar mechanisms
- Proactively identifying periods when there may be particular problems (eg extremely hot or cold weather) and adopting suitable measures to control the risks that result

3. Specific issues

The following issues are potential contributors to, or the result of, poorly managed T&F operations. Appropriate management controls that should be considered are given for each issue. This is not an exhaustive list.

4. Individual team' versus 'group' T&F

There are two types of T&F operation:

- 'Individual team' T&F, where the working day is over for the members of a particular working team (typically a single collection crew) when it has completed its individual task
- 'Group' T&F where the working day is over when all working teams from the depot have completed all the tasks (eg when all of the day's collection activities are complete)

Group T&F operations can promote good team spirit and are less likely to lead to rushing and shortcuts (as there is less perceived personal gain from doing so).

Both types of T&F operations can impact on sites receiving waste where a significant proportion of an operating fleet arrive nearly simultaneously to tip off or park up. Where that location has limited traffic capacity or existing traffic management issues, a sudden rush can significantly increase the risk of collision or injury. Identify such issues and put in place suitable controls to reduce the risk (eg by staggering vehicle returns).

Control measures: Could include

- Use group T&F rather than individual team T&F operations.
- Identify and address potential knock-on effects to waste receiving sites.

5. Start and finish points

Sometimes it is both necessary and desirable for staff to begin work in widely dispersed locations, eg in rural districts with centres of population that are widely separated. Even in urban locations, team members do not always start and finish work at a depot or similar facility.

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For example, team members are picked up en route to a collection round and dropped off when the collection round is complete.

Having collection or drop-off points that are away from the depot can reduce the level of contact the organisation has with individuals. In particular, this practice can reduce an employee's access to information, training, personal protective equipment (PPE) stores, equipment and good hygiene facilities. It also reduces management awareness of day to-day problems and field operatives' concerns.

While operational systems that result in field operatives having limited access to depot facilities are not inherently less safe, greater efforts need to be made to address the issues that might arise.

Control measures: To ensure effective communication and control, the following hierarchy should be applied in designing and maintaining waste/recycling operations:

- Require the operatives to start and finish their shifts at the depot every working day; or
- Where this cannot be achieved, ensure that operatives start and finish their shift at the depot on a regular basis (eg on one day each week); or
- Ensure crews/workers who cannot attend the depot are provided with the same quality and quantity of training, information and supervision as those who go to the depot every
- Working day.

6. Driving practices

Driving operations are the subject of separate guidance – see Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection.

Bad driving practices may have a significant impact on health and safety and may be aggravated and encouraged by poorly managed T&F operations. For example the desire to complete the collection round at the earliest possible time may encourage drivers to skimp or skip essential drivers' checks, to speed, to attempt difficult manoeuvres too quickly or without adequate assistance, and to encourage loading while moving.

Control measures: Could include

- Closely monitor driving-related incidents and near hits
- Carry out regular driving competency assessments (both announced and unannounced)
- Carry out appropriate retraining and specialist training for drivers where necessary
- Promote and encourage good driving, while deterring and discouraging bad driving, by using appropriate campaigns, promotions and incentive schemes

7. Overloading trucks

Even where vehicles are equipped with weighing devices, badly managed T&F practices can contribute to or substantially worsen vehicle overloading.

A high standard of monitoring vehicle weight tickets for overloading, coupled with good supervision and management, can be effective in ensuring that vehicles are not overloaded.

T&F practices are only a contributor to overloading: other major factors, such as weather conditions, seasonal changes in waste volume or density and waste/recycling collection round design also contribute. Application of good management practices can reduce the risk of overloading.

Control measures: Could include

- Maintain a high standard of monitoring vehicle weights, including effective systems to feed results back to drivers and manage any overloading issues identified
- Correctly use appropriate weighing devices to ensure collection rounds are 'balanced'

8. Pulling out in advance

Collection crews often split into two groups, one that 'pulls out' (going in front of the vehicle and pulling the waste and recyclables out on the kerbside) for the second group to load into the vehicle.

Where the first group 'pulls out' beyond the line of sight of the vehicle, the danger is increased to:

- The public (due for example bags blocking pavements and forcing pedestrians into the road)
- The pulling-out crew (due to increased lone working)
- The loading crew (workload increases, leading to increased risks of manual handling injury)

Control measures: Could include

- Working practices should only permit 'pulling out' in sight of the vehicle – where appropriate stipulate this in the collection contract and collection round design statements
- Where 'pulling out' is undertaken, there should be frequent rotation of crew members between pulling out and loading to reduce manual handling risks
- Effective and frequent field supervision

9. Loading bins onto vehicle

Many modern collection vehicles feature multiple bin lifts or emptying devices that can be operated independently. Whenever bins or other collection receptacles are lifted to be emptied there is a danger of waste or a collection receptacle falling from height onto anyone nearby, or striking someone as it completes its cycle.

Operating controls are typically placed in locations away from or protected from falling bins or debris. Where the correct practice of the operative loading the bin into the emptying mechanism and then moving to and operating the controls is observed, the operative should not be exposed to falling items or entrapment in the lifting device.

Control measures: Could include

- Timesaving practices that involve one operative putting the bin onto the vehicle while another operates the loading mechanism should be avoided and actively discouraged – the same person who puts the bin onto the vehicle should operate the loading mechanism
- Frequent and effective field supervision

10. Loading reversing vehicles

Vehicles should never be loaded when reversing. For additional guidance on reversing operations see Waste and recycling vehicles in street collection.

Control measures: Could include

- A strict ban on loading when a vehicle is reversing
- Frequent and effective field supervision

11. Safety mechanisms

Safety devices on refuse collection vehicles should not be bypassed to speed up collection.

Typical examples include overriding safety controls to reduce collection vehicle packing cycle times or to increase packing cycle pressures. Serious safety issues can result, from the obvious (operatives will have less time to avoid machinery which moves more quickly), to the indirect (overriding safety interlocks can disable apparently unrelated emergency stops and other safety controls).

Control measures: Could include

- Have effective, regular procedures to check that safety mechanisms are working properly
- Ensure that operatives are aware of the function and importance of safety controls, as well as the potential dangers of interfering with them
- Investigate the root-cause where safety mechanisms are bypassed and identify if 'time saving' is encouraging workers to bypass safety mechanisms

12. Slips and trips

Slips, trips and falls are the largest source of injury in the waste industry. Rushing, running and other similar 'time-saving' practices that T&F operations can encourage are likely to result in an increase in both the number and severity of injuries. A well-designed collection round and careful supervision in the field can reduce the incentive to rush, and can act as a control to prevent unsafe practices developing.

Control measures Could include

- Ensure collection rounds are balanced
- Give clear messages about expected behaviour in respect of running, rushing etc
- Make sure operatives know about the potential severity of injuries that can result from running or rushing collection rounds
- Have effective and frequent field supervision

13. Manual handling and overloading collection operatives

Manual handling is one of the major sources of accidents in the waste/recycling industry and can be responsible for debilitating long term injuries.

Collection operatives lift, carry, pull and empty hundreds of bags, bins, wheelie bins and boxes each working day. These receptacles vary in weight and contents and may need to be carried or pulled significant distances and/or across/around obstacles (other vehicles, steps, kerbs etc).

There is significant potential for musculoskeletal injuries from lifting, carrying and emptying these receptacles, particularly as changing waste/recycling management practices can affect the size, design, weight or frequency of collection of receptacles at each residence.

When collection staff carry as much as possible in an attempt to save time, (eg four or six bags), or push/pull more than one wheelie bin at once this may save time, but is likely to increase the overall risk of injury.

Control measures: Could include

- Have frequent and effective field supervision
- Ensure that material for collection is easily accessible, placed at the property boundary where possible
- Ensure that the collection method used is the most appropriate for the collection round and will ensure the health and safety of workers, so far as is reasonably practicable
- Use appropriately designed receptacles and vehicles
- Collection operatives should be able to undertake all manual handling operations competently – training and assessment can be used to ensure competence
- Discourage direct manual loading of bagged 'side' waste into bin-lift equipped vehicles, (which are not suited or designed for this) – such waste should first be placed into a wheellie bin for loading
- Skepping and similar practices should not be permitted

14. Hygiene

Working with municipal waste/recyclates has the potential for exposure to a significant range of hazardous substances, including rotting food, blood-contaminated products, faeces and various household chemicals.

Poorly managed T&F operations may encourage workers to neglect good hygiene practices or fail to wear and adequately maintain appropriate PPE.

Employees and others may suffer adverse health effects as a result of employees taking contamination into the home or other clean areas by, eg:

- Eating and smoking on the collection round
- Not washing before and after visiting the toilet
- Not washing appropriately during and after shifts

Where workers do not return to a depot (or other place) with suitable welfare facilities and supervision, the potential for poor hygiene practices to develop, and health impacts, is significantly increased.

Control measures: Could include

- Provide a detailed programme of information, education and training for good hygiene practices, which is regularly reviewed and repeated
- Ensure all employees have access to suitable welfare facilities and that those facilities are maintained in a high standard of cleanliness at all times

- Ensure that all employees wear appropriate PPE at all times, and that PPE is properly cared for and maintained
- Make hygiene practices a frequent matter of inspection, or review when supervising crews and individual workers

15. Noise

Evidence is emerging that some practices aimed at improving collection speed in kerbside glass collection may substantially increase noise, to which operatives are then exposed. How working practices affect noise should be considered when glass collection processes are being designed and during regular reviews of noise control measures.

Control measures: Could include

- Ensure that working practices do not increase noise in the kerbside glass collection
- Ensure that all employees wear appropriate PPE at all times, and that PPE is properly cared for and maintained

16. New and temporary crew members

If poorly managed, T&F operations can lead to new crew members being 'pushed' to compete with their more experienced team mates, leading to fatigue or exhaustion and an increased likelihood of misjudgement or injury.

New, temporary and agency staff within any crew may need time to build up their strength and stamina. This can affect a team's speed and effectiveness. Crews should be encouraged and able to make adjustments to support the introduction of new team members.

Control measures: Could include

- Closely supervise new crew members
- Follow up on induction training and monitoring during probationary periods
- Give team members a mentoring role to provide support for new crew members
- Where there are team or supervisory concerns that the worker and the crew are unsuited, consider an early review of alternative options
- Provide a visibly effective whistle-blowing policy or mechanism for collection crews to identify health and safety concerns
- Train supervisors to engage in open dialogue with frontline operatives, to recognise the signs of peer pressure, and to build trust with the workforce to deal with difficult situations
- Encourage frontline operatives to talk openly and without fear to supervisory staff

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Table: Summary of good practice guidance

Summary of good practice guidance	General Management	Type of T&F operation	Point of start and finish	Potential health impact	Enforcing safe working	Driving practices	Round design and management	Vehicle overloading	Slips and trips	Manual handling	Safety mechanisms	Loading bins and reversing	New crew members	Pulling out	Single and double- sided working
Effective two-way communication with crews, including access to crews at start and finish of rounds	X		X				X		X		X		X		
Make safety a key feature of collection round design	X		X				X							X	X
Monitor start and finish times of crews	X						X								
Monitor accident rates	X								X						
Monitor payloads and tipping weights	X						X	X							
Encourage staff to take regular breaks, monitor through tachograph or other mechanisms	X														
Proactively identify and prepare for problem periods	X														
Use group T&F practices in preference to individual team T&F		X													
Identify and address knock-on effects of T&F to waste receiving sites		X													
Adopt a training and education programme on good hygiene practices				X											
Ensure all employees have access to suitable welfare facilities, and that these are suitably maintained				X											
Monitor and control noise levels in kerbside glass collection				X											
Ensure effective supervision of crews and compliance with safe working practices (including PPE wearing)				X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ensure all layers of supervision and management lead by example and tackle poor practices				X	X				X	X					
Regularly review policies and procedures					X										
Monitor driving related incidents and near hits	X					X									
Have a regime to assess driver competency						X									

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Table: Summary of good practice guidance continued

Summary of good practice guidance	General Management	Type of T&F operation	Point of start and finish	Potential health impact	Enforcing safe working	Driving practices	Round design and management	Vehicle overloading	Slips and trips	Manual handling	Safety mechanisms	Loading bins and reversing	New crew members	Pulling out	Single and double-sided working
Promote and encourage good driving while deterring and discouraging bad driving						X									
Ensure that material for collection is accessible and that the collection method is the most appropriate for safety							X		X	X		X			
Ensure that operatives, including new workers, agency staff and temporary workers, are suitably trained and monitored													X	X	X
Assign a mentoring role to a team member to support new (etc.) crew members													X		
Ensure that a visibly effective whistle-blowing policy is in place													X		
Only permit 'pulling out' in the line of sight of the vehicle														X	
Ensure that 'pulling out' is regularly rotated between crew members														X	
Ensure that procedures and training emphasise the need to avoid crossing public roads so far as is practicable															X

Appendix 3: Example route sheet

In-cab route information systems can be used to ensure drivers follow the assessed route and provide information on that route, such as where hazards exist and how to react to them. For example, 'required to reverse into Acacia Close: School (do not collect during playtimes; 10.30–10.45, 12.00–13.00 and 14.30–14.45)'.
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Example route sheet

