



SHIFT BRIEFING



LEAF COLLECTION BEST PRACTICES

Preparation is the key to a safe and effective leaf collection season. Crews must know their routes and have the equipment checked out before pulling out of the yard. People have sustained serious injuries and even died because some of the basics were forgotten or ignored. Let's review a few of the key points and discuss each.

1. Never ride on the equipment – Workers may only ride in designated seats and wear seatbelts. Do not ride on trailer tongues, fenders, running boards, and similar surfaces.
2. Leaf collection is a mobile work zone. The MUTCD requires high-intensity warning lights that are visible to vehicles approaching from the rear and front. Additional safety measures may be needed for difficult streets.

Discuss streets/areas that have higher traffic volume or speed limits. What additional measures can be taken to protect crews in these challenging areas? Warning signs? Trailing vehicles? Flaggers?

3. Stay alert to traffic approaching from both directions. Drivers are in an especially good position to monitor approaching vehicles and warn workers on foot.
4. Workers on foot must remain visible to the driver (in direct line of sight or mirrors). Do not walk between two work vehicles, between truck and trailer, or behind a vehicle unless the vehicles are completely stopped.

Drivers – Do not move vehicles unless all workers on foot are visible and not in the path of travel.

5. Avoid backing as much as possible. If backing must be done, use a spotter and standard hand signals. All other workers on foot must stay visible to the driver and clear of the path of travel.
6. Avoid hot surfaces such as exhaust manifolds and pipes. Do not climb on top of the collection box.
7. Stay alert to hazards while collecting leaves. Inspect the leaf pile for debris before vacuuming – remove rocks, pumpkins, etc. Watch for low branches, street signs, etc.
8. Walk forward with the hose in front of you. Adjust the height of the hose to maintain a strong, neutral body posture. Minimize twisting as you maneuver the hose. Keep hands and feet clear of the nozzle.
9. Leaf collection is difficult and tedious. Come to work rested, hydrated, and properly dressed.
10. Leaf collection is as demanding on your equipment as it is on you. Debris and dirt wear out bearings. Constant bending and flexing of the hose stresses the support system. Trucks operating long hours at slow speeds can overheat. You must inspect your equipment. **DO NOT take an unsafe vehicle on the road.** If you have questions about whether a vehicle is 'road-worthy,' ask a mechanic.

Remember, the operation will likely be done on many successive days. If you fail to report a problem today, you may have to face it tomorrow. Inspect equipment at the end of your shift and report any problems or concerns.