



SHIFT BRIEFING



SANITATION - REAR PACKER ROLLOVER CASE STUDY

A New Jersey town experienced a tragedy when one of its rear packers rolled over at an intersection, severely injuring three employees. The following points are being shared with other Sanitation agencies in the hopes that no one will have to repeat the experience. The circumstances which are presented here were taken from initial reports and suppositions. They should not be taken as facts but rather as points of discussion that may relate to your operations.

On a sunny morning in May, a 3-person sanitation crew was using a rear packer to pick up bagged grass clippings curbside from residences. The roads were dry, and visibility was clear. As the crew finished one development and prepared to drive to the next area, about ½ mile away, the two collectors got into the cab of the truck. Neither they nor the driver wore seatbelts, although seatbelts were provided for three passengers in the cab's bench seat.

As the vehicle approached a controlled intersection, the light changed from green to yellow. The intersection is four lanes in either direction with left turn lanes. The driver maintained his speed and began to make his intended left turn. The driver reported feeling the load of bagged grass shift as he entered the turn. He steered into the lean of the truck but may have overcompensated. He again steered into the lean, but the truck continued to tip and landed on the passenger side door, sliding to a stop about 40 feet later.

The three occupants were conscious when the vehicle came to a rest. The driver was injured slightly and self-extricated. The middle passenger received minor injuries and also self-extricated through the broken-out windshield.

The most severely injured worker was the passenger closest to the passenger-side door. He received neck, back, and arm injuries. It was later determined he had sustained broken vertebrae in his neck.

The driver and middle passenger thought they saw smoke and fearing the truck was on fire, pulled the injured third passenger from the cab through the windshield. In fact, there was no fire. The truck was not provided with a first aid kit, fire extinguisher, or spill control kit. The consequences of this accident: 2 workers sustained injuries that resulted in lost time, the total loss of the rear packer equipment, and the unwanted notoriety of being front page news in the region's newspaper.

Discussion:

1. What factors contributed (or could have contributed) to the accident happening or to its severity?
 - Speed of vehicle
 - Pressure to complete the task quickly
 - Conditions of tires & suspension
 - Shifting of loads
 - Driver training/experience/attentiveness
2. What controls (engineering, Policies & Procedures, Personal Protective Equipment) could have prevented or mitigated this accident?
 - An enforced seatbelt policy
 - Fire extinguisher, first aid kit, and spill control kit (equipment and training)