

Safety Director's Bulletin

(One in a series of safety information bulletins from your Joint Insurance Fund)

S2011-6
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LEAF COLLECTION TIME...AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

A municipal worker was killed when he was run over by a leaf vacuuming truck. The victim was working beside the truck using a vacuum hose to suck up a curb-side pile of leaves. The driver felt a "bump." After stopping the truck, the driver discovered that the victim had been run over by the rear wheels.

In another fatality, the victim was riding on the yoke of the portable leaf vacuum as the driver was turning onto a side street. The vacuum hose swung loose, hitting several parked cars. The tow driver felt a "thump" and brought the vehicle to a stop. After stopping the truck, the driver found the victim who had been run over by the rear wheels of the vacuum. It is believed that the victim was attempting to retrieve and secure the swinging vacuum hose, lost his footing and fell from the yoke. Diamond plate had been welded onto the yoke of the trailer to provide better footing for an individual to ride on.

Collecting leaves can be hazardous as indicated by these two recent incidents in New Jersey. Municipalities / Agencies can follow the tips provided below to protect workers:

- Employers should perform a job hazard analysis on all leaf vac and collection equipment.
- Thoroughly train all new employees prior to allowing them to operate any piece of equipment.
- Provide refresher training at the beginning of each leaf season for experienced workers. If the season is extended, provide additional reinforce safety procedures at regular intervals.
- Follow all manufacturers' recommendations for the safe operation of leaf vacuuming equipment.
 - Never allow workers to ride on the yoke, or other areas not specifically designated for riders
 - Maintain visual contact between the driver and workers on foot when working close to the vehicle and when backing
 - Check both side mirrors repeatedly when backing
 - Use a reliable spotter positioned to see both the driver and any blind spots behind the vehicle when backing
 - Use standard hand signals when backing
 - Stop the truck if the spotter must change positions and whenever visual contact is lost
 - Remain clear of the rear of the vehicle when the backup lights or alarm are on
 - Drivers must wear their seatbelts and not become distracted with cell phones, etc.
- Leaf Collection is a Mobile Work Zone. Establish traffic control according to the MUTCD. At a minimum, high intensity amber warning lights. Do not use directional arrows on 2-lane roadways.
- Provide employees with and ensure the use of all personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer or required by regulatory agencies. Consider
 - ANSI Class 2 or 3 high visibility apparel
 - Work boots
 - Good pair of gloves
 - Hearing and eye protection
 - Optional dust masks may be provided for dusty conditions

It is suggested that Safety Director's Bulletins are posted on your safety announcement boards. This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented to you by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding the content of this bulletin, please contact J.A. Montgomery Risk Control at 877.398.3046.

J. A. Montgomery Risk Control
Nov. 4, 2011



Make no modifications to any equipment, unless authorized by the manufacturer.



Follow the warning labels. Do not remove them. If necessary, contact the manufacturer to obtain replacement labels.



Coordination between driver and collector is a critical component for a safe operation.

Drivers must maintain the proper distance from the curb to keep the vacuum hose operator as far as possible from the wheels of the truck or trailer.

Vacuum hose operators and workers on foot must maintain situational awareness not to put themselves in a potential Crush Zone.