

# Best Practices for Garbage Collection

## Concern Details

### Background:

Collecting garbage and recyclables is a strenuous job due to heavy loads, awkward postures, and repetitive lifting. Following these recommended practices will help reduce the risk of developing a musculoskeletal injury.



Garbage collector lifting bags into back of truck

## Controls

### For the Worker:

- Move feet to pick up garbage and place into truck, instead of twisting your trunk and throwing the load.
- Reduce load weight by ensuring you only lift one garbage bag at a time.
- Do not lift heavy, awkward loads by yourself.
- Wear appropriate footwear, gloves, and clothing for the weather conditions.

### For the Employer:

- Wear appropriate footwear, gloves, and clothing for the weather conditions.
- Ensure trucks have adequate grating on exterior and interior steps to prevent slips.
- Ensure trucks have adequate grab handles at the side doors and back of the truck to encourage 3-point contact. Ensure grab handles have enough grip.
- Ensure that ride-on platforms at the back of the truck are adequate size. Add extensions to steps if necessary.
- Purchase trucks with air ride.
- Purchase trucks with big, wide, and lower side hopper and lower rear hoppers.
- Investigate automated load trucks.
- Investigate design recycling and composite bins to increase vertical hand heights when lifting and to enable 2-handed lifting of organic bins.

- Decrease number of stops per individual worker to reduce high lifting frequency.
- Set a maximum weight limit per container and notify customers that items will be tagged and NOT collected.
- Consider payment by the hour instead of tonnage or using a “finish and go home” pay scheme to discourage work done at excessively fast rates that increases the potential for injuries.
- Improve communication with the community on where garbage should be placed, especially during the winter months.

*The information contained in this document was developed in partnership with the Infrastructure Health and Safety Association ([https://www.ihsa.ca/topics\\_hazards/msds.aspx](https://www.ihsa.ca/topics_hazards/msds.aspx)) and CRE-MSD as part of the following project funded by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (Ontario):*

*Kramer, D., Bigelow, P., Vi, P., Garritano, E., Wells, R. Encouraging construction companies to adopt innovations to reduce MSDs using different knowledge transfer techniques. 2008-2011.*