



# Waste Collection- Overexertion Injuries

During 2000–2004, solid waste collection workers experienced 640 serious overexertion injuries resulting in over 71,000 lost workdays.



These injuries were so serious, the workers had to take time off work to recover, or in some cases were permanently disabled. These injuries from lifting, pushing, and pulling are costly and affect your industrial insurance premiums. They contribute to the reason for the average base rate of \$2.24 per hour per employee paid by waste collection employers in 2006. If your company has a higher than average number of injuries (claims), your “experience rating” could increase by as much as 25% in one year to \$2.78 per hour per employee.



Stated in another way, if you had 10 full-time waste collection employees and had an average number of injuries (claims), you would pay about \$44,000 in premiums in 2006. If your experience rating increased by 25% because you had higher than average injuries, you would pay about \$11,000 more or \$55,000 in premiums in 2006.

## Causes of overexertion injuries

- Almost half of the 640 overexertion injuries involved lifting, throwing, or carrying garbage containers such as barrels, cans, containers, pails, and sacks.
- Four percent of overexertion injuries were due to pushing or pulling containers.



### Solution Examples



## Ways to prevent overexertion injuries

- Use standard carts with mechanical lifts. Retrofit trucks with semi-automated “flippers” or phase in fully automated or semi-automated trucks to replace rear loading trucks.
- Set and enforce a maximum weight limit per can
- Work with property owners/planners to ensure easy access for front-loading trucks. For space limited areas that require rolling the “dumpster” into an acceptable position, the positioning path should be paved and level.
- Negotiate alternative options for customers with poorly accessed and difficult to roll containers such as—using a smaller container with a more frequent pick-up schedule, using 2 easier to move containers, or adding fees for difficult to move containers.
- Devise a motorized tugging device that can be transported with the truck to mechanically push/pull the container.