



TRASH TRUCKS and OSHA: RIDING ON THE REAR STEP

“North Carolina General Statute S59-129(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of North Carolina: The employer did not furnish to each of his employees conditions of employment and a place of employment which were free from recognized hazards that were causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees in that employees were exposed to: a) the hazard of riding on rear of backing solid waste management vehicles such as rear loader packers, falling off the rear of the vehicles and being run over by the rear wheels. (Reference ANSI Z245.1-1992 Section 7.1.12.6 which states: ‘Caution-Do not use riding steps when vehicle is exceeding 10 mph or operating in reverse or when the distance traveled exceeds 2/10 mile.’) NOTE: Among other methods, one feasible and acceptable abatement method to correct this hazard would be for the collectors to be trained to dismount the vehicle prior to backing and stand in a position that allows them to be seen easily by the driver.”

The above is an actual citation issued to a City in North Carolina. The penalty for this violation was set at \$6,300. It was a “Serious violation” with 32 employees exposed to this falling hazard.

A similar citation was written some time prior to this in a town near Charlotte for somewhat the same circumstances: riding on the rear steps. In that instance, the vehicle was traveling on a 4-lane major road at speeds reportedly in excess of 35 mph.

In another instance, a town in central North Carolina suffered a fatality to one of its trash collectors who did, in fact, dismount the vehicle. However, he was walking directly behind the backing vehicle and was unable to be seen by the driver.

Note that this was a General Duty Clause citation that referenced a national consensus standard: ANSI-Z245.1.

Risk Management Services Loss Control & Health Services suggests the following:

- 1) Only ride on the rear steps in clear, dry weather. Snow, ice, or rain may make the steps extremely slippery and unsafe to stand on.
- 2) Dismount the steps and stay clear of the rear of the vehicle in an area where the driver can easily see you.
- 3) Do not ride on the steps when exceeding 10 mph, when operating in reverse or when traveling distances of more than 2/10 mile.

- 4) For the safety of all members of the crew, everyone should ride in the cab, with seat belts securely fastened, when traveling at speeds or distances above the ANSI recommendations.

These simple steps will assist you in the prevention, control, and reduction of potentially serious injuries to your employees and the possibility of OSHA penalties and fines. Train your employees to observe these safe work practices. Train your drivers to understand and recognize the hazards noted in the OSHA citation.

To learn more about accessing information about OSHA citations, go to their website at: www.osha.gov/pls/imis/ and search for any OSHA violation report.

For a copy of the original citation, please contact Jim Davenport.

For additional information contact risk management services at **1- 800-228-0986** and select “**safety and risk control**” from the available options.

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