



Risk control

Refuse Collections



In partnership with



Refuse Collections

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Introduction

Refuse collection is a key risk for many local authorities. Arising out of our involvement in a number of high-profile adverse incidents in this area we arranged a series of workshops which looked at the main areas of risk flowing from refuse collection activities. The workshops provided a forum at which we discussed with delegates how to appropriately manage the risks from this service area and legislation that was applicable in this service area.

This booklet is the result of five interactive workshops delivered to clients, drawing together the key learning points and building upon the foundations of the presentations. The topics covered included:

- 1 Why refuse risks are of such interest to insurers
- 2 How to recognise and respond to the challenges posed using refuse vehicles
- 3 How to determine which insurance policy responds to a claim
- 4 The behavioural and cultural aspects of driving and their relevance to refuse vehicles in particular
- 5 Health and Safety
- 6 Corporate Manslaughter and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) sentencing guidelines
- 7 Preventative steps which all fleet owners can take to improve their risk profile and reduce the frequency and severity of accidents

The Workshops

Risk Management Partners (RMP) developed the content for the workshops, and we were supported by colleagues in the field of Risk Management and Claims Management from Gallagher Bassett. External support was provided by a number of solicitors who dealt with the topic of Corporate Manslaughter and the relevant HSE sentencing guidelines.

Following the presentations delegates were then given a scenario based on a real claim and asked to consider the following points:

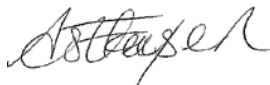
- a) Legal aspects
- b) The claim itself
- c) What went wrong
- d) How the event may have been prevented
- e) What delegates would take away and apply within their own workplace

As a final note and as part of the information flow and skills exchange, we have also taken the opportunity to include within the appendices some work topics which we hope will be of interest.



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Workshops

The workshops took place in Cardiff, London, Manchester, Glasgow, and Birmingham. Over 200 delegates attended the workshops and were drawn from a range of disciplines. Attendees included Insurance Officers, Claims Management Officers, Transport Managers, Health and Safety Officers, Legal representatives, and Insurance Brokers.

Shared Learning

At each event we discussed a refuse accident scenario which had resulted in personal injury to an operative. We debated the consequences of the incident for the employee, the refuse crew, the organisation, and the insurer. We combined the outcomes of the exercise from all the events and the following are the common learning points:

Examples of evidence that would need to be captured / preserved following an incident to support insurers / claims handlers in respect of liability and quantum

- Maintenance records
- CCTV if available including nearby buildings, streets, other vehicles
- Weather forecasts
- Policy and procedures in place at the time of the incident
- Medical, occupational health, driving licence and training records
- Risk assessments
- Witness statements and photographs of the scene
- PPE and safety equipment
- Police records and reports
- Telematics – if available
- Information on the injured party and their dependents
- Employee records (pre incident)
- Results of any drug and alcohol tests undertaken.

Dealing with the effect on employees involved in a serious incident

- Counselling and / or rehabilitation
- Compassionate leave
- Communication with employees on investigation progress
- Counselling of others in a similar role who may be impacted by an incident
- Union engagement
- Management and Member / Councillor involvement
- Long term employee support
- Support for staff during any police or enforcement authority investigation

Key risk prevention strategies that organisations should have in place

- Policy and procedures
- Risk assessments
- Safety systems of work (including protocols and procedures)
- Training
- PPE

- Claims reviews
- Analysis of adverse incidents (including near miss incidents)
- Drug and alcohol testing
- Awareness of circumstances in employees' lives that may affect their performance
- Open, honest, and effective communication

Following an incident, the response expected from an insurer, claims handling agent and risk control team

- Prompt response and early engagement
- Support and 'sensible' discussion
- Confirmation of cover in place
- Be both a critical friend and part of the team
- Assist with communications and media management
- Share lessons
- Dedicated handler
- Assist with any enforcement authority investigation if required

From the workshop exercise, common causes of accidents emerged from the discussions – all of which, proactive organisations should be giving thought to the causes for them and the measures they have and may need to have in place to mitigate such an event.

The Authority View

- 1** Lack of communication between the crew.
A refuse vehicle is a mobile factory; there are people always undertaking different tasks within and all-round the vehicle and clear communication is essential to ensure a safe working environment is maintained.
- 2** Human error remains the single greatest accident cause - be that from familiarity with route and operations, lack of attention and focus (distraction) or making assumptions rather than checking and communicating with the crew. Less common causes that emerged from discussions, but still important were ineffective PPE, lack of visibility and medical conditions.
- 3** Lack of or ineffective training in reversing and what to do in the event of a collision or incident. Drivers at both ends of the experience spectrum can have an impact – newly qualified drivers may lack confidence whilst experienced drivers may be complacent or over-confident.
- 4** Agency drivers and operatives were of particular concern. Undertaking robust checks when on-boarding new agency staff is vital to ensure the safety of both the crew and the public. It is important that agency workers understand the policy and procedures of the organisation as these may differ from their last assignment.
- 5** Accommodating for adverse weather conditions and adapting 'normal operations' if there are difficult driving conditions, poor visibility, speed restrictions etc. is an important consideration.
- 6** Narrow roads and cul-de-sacs can pose just as many hazards for refuse crews as fast-flowing main roads. There can be a lack of empathy by other road users who are keen to continue

their journey, particularly considering the usual time of day for collection is early morning. Street furniture can also create difficulties for manoeuvring refuse vehicles and low speed accidents with such obstacles is common.

Key Messages

Positive safety culture filters down from the top of the organisation and managers and supervisors often underestimate how powerful their influence can be over their workforce in instilling a culture which is safety aware and compliant.

Those organisations which adopt a proactive safety regime put themselves in the strongest position to create a shift in culture and raise the levels of safety compliance across their refuse activities. Such a regime may include – reactive investigations, proactive spot checks, record checks, audits, and data reviews.

Delegate Feedback



Corporate Manslaughter and Health and Safety Sentencing Guidelines

At each workshop some of the leading industry solicitors presented a session on the potential legal consequences of a personal injury accident arising from refuse collection activities. The following is a summary of the material presented by Plexus Law.

Background

Criminal prosecutions in the UK for Health and Safety offences and Corporate Manslaughter can be extremely high profile due to the significant levels of fine imposed and the lasting damage to the organisation's reputation. Health and Safety criminal prosecutions can also be brought against individuals within an organisation with the most serious offences resulting in imprisonment.

The sentencing guidelines for Health and Safety and Corporate Manslaughter offences came into force for all cases sentenced in the Criminal Courts on or after 1 February 2016 irrespective of when the incident / breach of duty occurred. These guidelines apply in England and Wales and the Scottish Criminal Courts also have full regard to them when handing down fines following successful prosecutions.

These guidelines are highly significant as they allow for high, potentially multi-million-pound fines, for large organisations. The highest fines can be up to £20 million for high culpability Corporate Manslaughter cases.

Sentencing Guidelines

The guidelines and how they operate for both companies and individuals can be found at the following here:

<https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/sentencing-and-the-council/about-sentencing-guidelines/about-published-guidelines/health-and-safety-offences-corporate-manslaughter-and-food-safety-and-hygiene-offences/>

The guidelines make clear that:

“A fine imposed on an organisation must be *sufficiently substantial* to have a *real economic impact* which will bring home to both management and owners the need to comply with Health and Safety legislation.”

The Court must first assess the overall seriousness of the offence based on the:

Level of culpability	Very High, High, Medium, or Low
The seriousness of the harm risk	Levels A, B or C
The likelihood of harm	High, Medium, or Low
Harm Category	1, 2, 3 or 4

A crucial point to note is that Health and Safety prosecutions by the HSE / EHO can also be brought based purely upon the risk of harm without any incident or loss / damage having occurred.

The Court is also required to consider the organisation's turnover, and the guidelines then give the starting point and range of any potential fine once the Harm Category has been determined. For local authorities and other public sector organisations, the Annual Revenue Budget (ARB) is used as the equivalent of turnover being the best indicator of the size of the authority. If alternative financial criteria are relied on, evidence from the local authority will be required to demonstrate to the Court why the ARB is not the appropriate financial measure.

The Court will also "step back", review and, if necessary, adjust the initial fine based on turnover / ARB to ensure that it is proportionate to the means of the offender. Other factors that the Court takes into consideration include aggravating and mitigating features and co-operation with the prosecution. There is also a one third discount off any fine for a guilty plea at the earliest available opportunity.

For local authorities and other public sector organisations the ARB could be huge but handing down significant fines based on that figure could be detrimental to the public and council taxpayers. Large fines could also impact on a local authority's ability to improve conditions in the local community and thus negatively impact the public and the local economy. Such adverse consequences should not be the objective of sentencing. The sentencing guidelines therefore specifically state that:

"Where the fine will fall on public or charitable bodies, the fine should normally be substantially reduced if the offending organisation is able to demonstrate that the proposed fine would have a significant impact on the provision of its services."

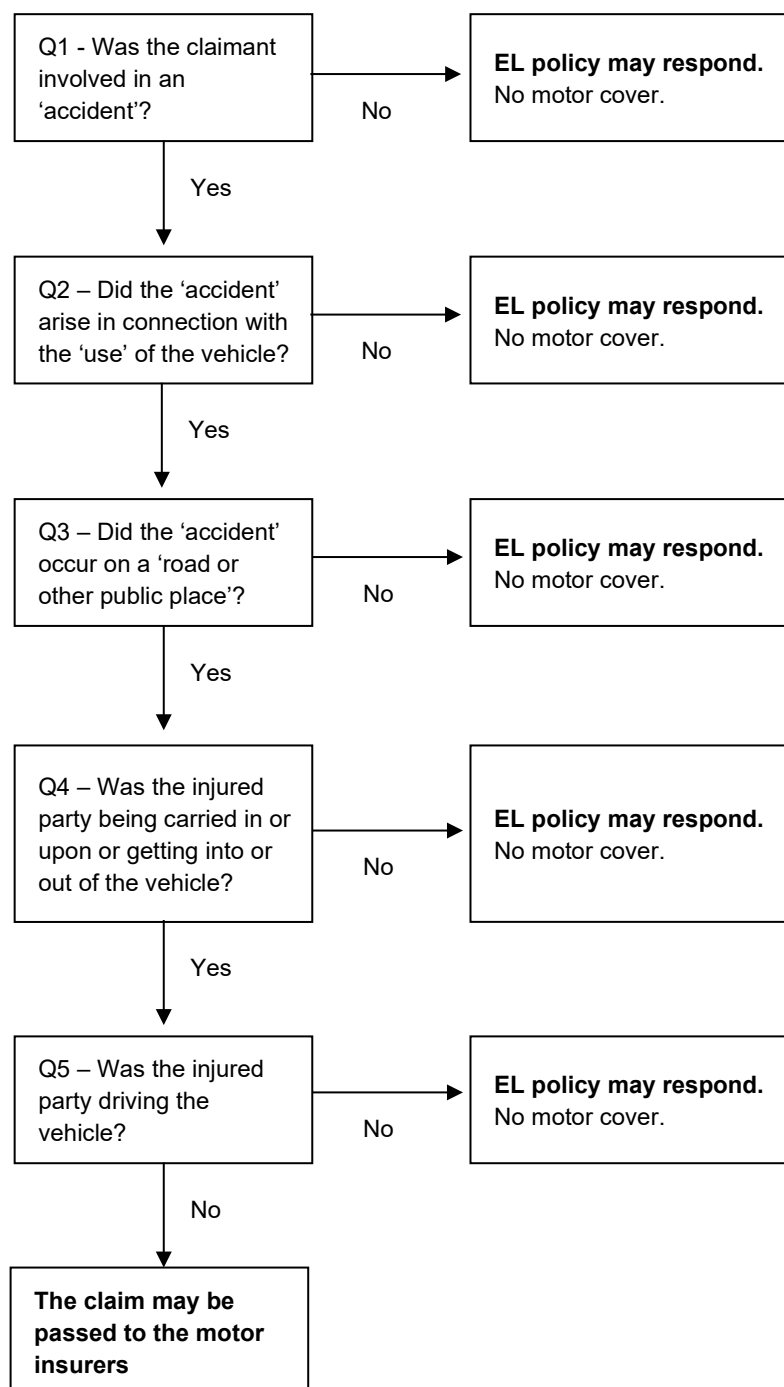
A local authority should therefore take the following steps when faced with a Health and Safety / Corporate Manslaughter prosecution:

- Obtaining the ARB and consideration of alternative financial criteria to evidence turnover
- Obtaining evidence to demonstrate the impact that a large fine would have on the provision of services to the public and local community e.g. specific examples of how a large fine would reduce public services to any extent and the economic and social impacts
- Produce witness statements in support from the Chief Executive or Senior Managers providing evidence of the positive impact of the local authority's work in the community and how that could be adversely affected
- Consideration of early expert evidence in respect of both breach of duty and financial impacts to minimise the organisation's exposure and reduce the severity of any fine / sentence
- Early legal advice affecting legal professional privilege

Motor and Employers' Liability Claims

It is often difficult to determine which policy is triggered by a complex claim involving personal injury to an employee arising from refuse collection activities.

Whilst each claim must be treated on its own merits and circumstances, answering the following questions should assist in determining whether the Motor or Employers' Liability policy should respond.



Below are some examples of claim scenarios and an explanation as to the policy to respond to the incident:

- 1** A refuse operative alights a cab as the vehicle is still moving, albeit slowly. Upon contacting the ground the operative slips and his foot / ankle is crushed by the moving vehicle.

If the operative still has one foot on the vehicle and the other on the ground the claim is most likely to be treated as a Motor claim. If both feet are off the vehicle and the operative has taken even the smallest of steps forward it is likely the claim will become an Employers' Liability claim.
- 2** A refuse operative alights the vehicle and makes good their movement towards collecting a wheelie bin. Whilst moving the bin they sustain a strain or other injury.

Employers' Liability claim.
- 3** As a refuse operative removes a wheelie bin from the back of the refuse vehicle, they let the bin slip from the mechanism, and it hits a member of the public.

This is most likely to be a Motor claim and not a possible Public Liability claim as the claim arises from the use of the vehicle including loading and unloading.
- 4** As per (3) only this time the refuse operative is moving the wheelie bin to the side of the road and they hit a member of the public with the bin.

This claim could be either a Motor or Public Liability claim and would turn on the precise facts of the incident. If the unloading of the bin was completed then the claim is Public Liability, however, if the incident occurred whilst still in the motion of removing the bin from the vehicle mechanism it could be argued it is Motor - a break in the unloading process could move the claim nearer to a Public Liability claim.
- 5** Whilst the operative is collecting the wheelie bin from the side of a house, they knock the fence / wall and cause damage.

Public Liability as the incident does not occur on the highway.
- 6** An operative is attempting to enter the cab, and the driver moves forward injuring their colleague.

Motor claim.
- 7** The driver is injured in an accident in which they are driving the refuse vehicle because of a defective braking system due to lack of maintenance.

This is going to be an Employers' Liability claim as there is no provision for driver injury under the Motor policy.
- 8** As per (7) but there are injuries to passengers in the cab and a third party in another vehicle is injured.

Motor claim.

Please note that while these are common interpretations of incidents, each claim would always need to be treated on the facts of the case and the applicable policy wording.

Behavioural Risk Factors

Driver safety does not end at the induction of drivers. As the driver is responsible for the rest of the crew and with the complex environment within and around the vehicle, the need to ensure risks are effectively managed is crucial. The following section is an extract from the behavioural risk factors presentation from the workshops which offered delegates advice on how to develop a safe working culture across their refuse and fleet departments.

Safety Climate and Behaviour

Beyond the recruitment, induction, and training environment, the employer has a significant degree of influence on refuse crews' attitudes and perceptions of safety and on their actual safety behaviours in the field. If safety short-cut taking by crew members is common and unchallenged – or even encouraged, then it becomes part of routine operating norms or culture.

The risk of a poor safety climate developing is greater when personnel work in close groups, where peer-pressure or 'group influence' is present e.g. refuse crews. Therefore, strong safe promotion, oversight and communication is crucial.

Safety Culture

A positive safety culture is one that can demonstrate overt commitment towards safety, with the motivation and resources to pursue and effectively communicate safety goals and information.

Refuse operations must create an atmosphere where involvement in safety is the norm for their crews. It must be shown that lessons have been learned from previous incidents and should not simply engage in attaching blame to individuals when things go wrong. Furthermore, it is vital to acknowledge the contribution of organisational procedures and practices in incident causation as well as failure to comply with safety rules, including a routine acceptance of non-compliance or safety shortcut taking.

Safety culture is determined by management practices and leadership. The key to organisational safety practice lies in clear, demonstrated commitment to safety leadership throughout the management chain, but especially in front-line management who are in regular contact with crews.

The degree to which management are observed or perceived to be overtly committed to and involved in safety behaviour is the primary factor that affects individual employee 'safe behaviours'. An effective safety culture has the total commitment of senior management and welcomes the involvement of all its members' efforts to improve safety.

Symptoms of a negative organisational safety culture can include:

- Widespread and routine procedural violations
- Failure to comply with the organisation's own safety management systems (although both can also be due to the poor design of procedures)
- Management decisions that consistently put productivity or cost before safety

Organisations can be identified as having one of the following attitudes toward driving at work safety:

Pathological: "who cares about safety as long as we're not caught"

Reactive: "Safety is important: we do a lot every time we have an accident"

Calculative: "We have systems in place to manage all risk - but workers think procedures are not that important"

Proactive: "We try to anticipate safety problems before they arise - workers are acquiring beliefs that safety is worthwhile"

Generative: "We know achieving safety is difficult; values and safety-behaviour fully internalised as beliefs, almost to the point of invisibility"

Crews may feel their views are ignored and that issues raised about safety are not responded to or acted upon. With regards to communication, there may be mixed messages concerning management commitment to safety. Are managers trained in effective safety communication?

Research shows that the main problem in influencing crew behaviours is a perception by them of management not fully backing up policy and desired safe operating procedures with actual practices, leading to mixed messages for the workforce. Please see references below:

- 1 Arboleda, A., Morrow, P. C., Crum, M. R., & Shelley, M. C. (2003). Management practices as antecedents of safety culture within the trucking industry: Similarities and differences by hierarchical level. *Journal of Safety Research*, 34(2), 189-197.
- 2 Clarke, S. (1998). Organizational factors affecting the incident reporting of train drivers. *Work & Stress*, 12(1), 6-16.
- 3 Cohen, A. (1977). Factors in successful occupational safety programs. *Journal of Safety Research*, 9, 168-178.
- 4 Diaz, R., & Cabrera, D. (1996). Safety climate and attitude as an evaluator of organisational safety. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 29, 643-650.
- 5 Dwyer, Y., & Raftery, A.E. (1991). Industrial accidents are produced by social relations of work: A sociological theory of industrial accidents. *Applied Ergonomics*, 22, 167-179.
- 6 Hofmann, D.A., & Stetzer, A. (1996). A cross-level investigation of factors influencing unsafe behaviour and accidents. *Personnel Psychology*, 49, 307- 339.
- 7 Mattila, M., Rantanen, E., & Hyttinen, M. (1994). The quality of work environment, supervision, and safety in building construction. *Safety Science*, 17, 257-268.
- 8 Oliver, A., Cheyne, A., Tomas, J.M., & Cox, S. (2002). The effects of organizational and individual factors on occupational accidents. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 75, 473-488.
- 9 Roughton J.E., & Mercurio J. (2002). *Developing an Effective Safety Culture A Leadership Approach*. Woburn: Butterworth – Heinemann
- 10 Shannon, H.S., Mayr, J., & Haines, T. (1997). Overview of the relationship between organizational and workplace factors and injury rates. *Safety Science*, 26, 201-217.
- 11 Smith, M.J., Cohen, H.H., & Cohen, A. (1978). Characteristics of a successful safety program. *Journal of Safety Science*, 10, 5-15.

- 12 Varonen, U., & Mattila, M. (2000). The safety climate and its relationship to safety practices, safety of the work environment and occupational accidents in eight wood-processing companies. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 32, 761- 769.
- 13 Wills, A.R., Watson, B., & Biggs, H.C. (2006). Comparing safety climate factors as predictors of work-related driving behaviour. *Journal of Safety Research*, 37, 375–383.
- 14 Zohar, D. (1980). Safety climate in industrial organisations: Theoretical and applied implications. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 65, 96-102.
- 15 Zohar, D. (2000). A group-level model of safety climate: Testing the effect of group climate on microaccidents in manufacturing jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(4), 587-596.

Recommendations for Effective Behavioural Influence

Across the research conducted it can be concluded that there appears to be a complex culture of factors that are responsible for safety violations and incidents despite established safety procedures and policy.

There are three overarching factors implicated:

- 1 How people are managed, and safety is communicated
- 2 How people are trained
- 3 The work and working environment

Management and Communication

People in a position of authority, such as supervisors and managers, must deal with infringements in a consistent manner to effect a behavioural change. Ensuring compliance with safety procedures across the workforce would reduce the risk of incidents and help to develop a more positive safety culture.

— Listening Actively

Questions about safe operating practices should be a part of everyday work conversations. Management should listen actively to what they are being told by employees and take what they hear seriously and be seen to do so.

— Safety as a Joint Exercise

Build ownership of safety at all levels to exploit the unique knowledge that crews have of their own work. This can include active involvement in workshops, risk assessments. In organisations with a successful positive safety culture, safety is seen as a joint exercise.

— Gather Information on Compliance

Monitor safety regularly e.g. selecting a random representative and good-sized sample of refuse crews and interviewing them in a relaxed atmosphere to gather information on compliance and practices that may result in safety procedures being compromised.

— The Safety Message

Be honest with the workforce about the importance of adherence to safety rules for refuse operations and associated work activities. The priority of an organisation must be perceived by the workforce to be safe operations followed by compliance with performance targets.

Training

Whilst interventions may be in place to address safety concerns, (for example, health and safety audits, driving assessments etc.), these assume that workers hold the belief that 'safety starts with me.' Workers may also be concerned about the implication of being involved in an incident for fear of punishment and therefore fail to report these let alone be open and honest about true causal factors.

It is common practice for organisations to re-train following a vehicle incident, but routinely this involves repetition of known skills as opposed to addressing the behaviours that led to the incident (i.e. for drivers, a driving skills assessment) and incident investigations tend to address surface level issues and fail to provide an in-depth analysis of why the incident took place.

Work Environment

Ensure the environment and equipment are as clean and well maintained as possible – this endorses the fact that the vehicle is a professional workplace. This will also encourage the workers to take pride in the vehicles and will influence the amount of care taken when loading.

Depot yards and operating locations generating more vehicle damage claims should be surveyed and an analysis of the nature of these collisions and contributing factors should be undertaken. Factors to consider include time, type of manoeuvre, situational factors (e.g., exceptional activity - such as during periods of disruption where workloads are higher) and individual driver factors (e.g., length of service, time on shift and shift changeover) and known behavioural characteristics.

Employers should ensure drivers are provided with sufficient information on remaining comfortable in the driver's seat to reduce strain and injury. Vehicle mirrors should be properly configured and adjusted for yard manoeuvres. The drivers need to be suitably trained to set their mirrors correctly to reduce neck craning and stretching to see. Audio and vision-based proximity sensors and reversing cameras to reduce collisions at the depot are effective control measures to put in place. If any defects to the vehicle or equipment provided are identified by drivers or crew members, then they should be encouraged to report the defect without delay.

Summary

Refuse vehicles can be considered mobile factories, with a number of operatives always working in and around the vehicle. The crew are continuously undertaking dynamic risk assessments and making quick judgements to manage the risks around them to protect themselves and their colleagues. The local authority has a duty to ensure they have been provided with the appropriate training, guidance, equipment, and supervision to enable them to operate safely to protect themselves and the public who are going about their daily business all around them.

We learned a great deal from the workshop attendees who are responsible for these operations, for health and safety in their organisation, and from leading the risk and insurance functions. The feedback from those who participated was that they recognised this was a high-risk activity, of interest and concern to insurers, and that one accident could have significant financial and reputational consequences for them.

We hope you find the booklet useful in supporting your existing risk management practices in this area.

Appendix A: Workshop

RMP – Refuse Vehicle Event Worksheet – Fictional

Narrative

8:30am Monday morning, cold, wet, and windy day

Mr Perryman was at the wheel of a 65 plate Dennis refuse vehicle.

Mr Thomas was collecting the refuse and Miss Davies was acting as a banks person.

Circumstances

Mr Thomas has finished collecting the last wheelie bin in the cul-de-sac before the next collection point. Before the next collection he returned to the vehicle opening the door in one movement and placing his left foot on the foot plate. At that point, the vehicle moved off causing Mr Thomas to fall under the vehicle and the rear wheels to run over his legs.

Parties Involved and Incidentals

Dave Thomas – bin operative

30-year-old male - married with 2 children, both minors. Employee of the insured.

Injuries - significant crush injuries to left leg resulting in a below knee amputation.

Michael Perryman – driver, 60-year-old male.

Employee of the insured - no injuries.

Has an ongoing medical condition.

Susan Davies: bin operative, 32-year-old female.

Agency worker - no injuries.

Witnessed the incident.

Mr and Mrs Tyson:

Members of the public – witnesses.

Police

Local police attended the scene, and an accident investigation was conducted.

Vehicle

65 plate Dennis refuse truck - vehicle has CCTV, front, rear, and flanks, along with GPS and telematics fitted. Regularly serviced. The vehicle usually has a reversing alert to warn pedestrians and other drivers that the vehicle was reversing. On this occasion the alert was not working.

Witness Statements:

Mr Thomas:

'I had just collected the last wheelie bins before we moved on to the next batch, which I usually walk to, and Mr Perryman drives ahead. I realised I had forgotten my gloves so returned to the vehicle to get them. As I returned to the vehicle it was stationary, so I opened the door in one swift move and placed my left foot on the footplate. As I leant forward into the vehicle to get my gloves the vehicle moved off. That is all I can remember.'

Mr Perryman:

'I reversed into the cul-de-sac at around 5mph. Miss Davies had already alighted the vehicle and acting as banks person, guiding me into a tight spot. She was positioned to the rear driver side of the vehicle. Mr Thomas had also got out of the vehicle in preparation to collect the wheelie bins. I successfully completed the reversing manoeuvre and waited for Mr Thomas to load the refuse. I cannot recall if he was wearing his high visibility jacket or not. Miss Davies signalled that the last refuse had been loaded. It is usual practice for Mr Thomas to walk to the next collection. I knew the vehicle moved but thereafter my recollection is blank.'

Miss Davies:

'I was standing to the rear driver side of the vehicle and successfully guided Mr Perryman into position. Mr Perryman remained at the window, and we were talking about my recent holiday. I saw Mr Thomas load the last bin, so I indicated to Mr Perryman the way was clear. There was a short pause, and the vehicle moved forward. I then heard some distressing noises coming from the passenger side of the vehicle. I ran around the vehicle and saw Mr Thomas under the rear wheel of the vehicle, he was clearly very distressed. I noticed he did not have his high visibility jacket on, which is unusual for him.'

Questions:

- 1 What evidence needs to be captured / preserved in respect of liability and quantum? What would you report and provide to your claims handling agent or insurer?
- 2 How are you going to manage the employees in response to this traumatic incident?
- 3 How well prepared are you? What risk prevention methods do you have in place?
- 4 What response would you expect in such circumstances from your insurer, claims handling agent and risk control team?
- 5 Why did the accident happen? What was the root cause?
- 6 Who is liable, why, and how much will it cost?
- 7 Can the Health and Safety issues affect the claims situation?

Appendix B: Contract and Project Management

Contract and Project Management – Working Successfully with Partners

Setting Up

Many local authorities have contracted out their refuse collection service to a third-party provider / partner. In doing so, they seek to transfer much of the financial and legal risks associated with the service over to the contractor. This is only effective if the local authority first takes all reasonable steps to assure itself that the contractor is competent to conduct the role on their behalf. Regardless of any transfer arrangements, the local authority remains subject to the Health and Safety at Work Act and the owner of its reputation to its constituents and beyond.

Since the UK's departure from the European Union, OJEU has been replaced by a UK-only tendering service and there will no longer be a legal requirement to publish procurement contracts on OJEU. Part of the process should be combining the experience of operational managers and workers with those skilled in the procurement process, to shape a clear specification that will meet the council's needs with transparent selection and award criteria for bidders.

These partnering arrangements are usually for a minimum of 10 years but can stretch far beyond this timeframe. It is a challenge for authorities to know what their waste service may / could look like in that time and similarly an equally challenging task for contractors to price and design a programme of works for such a lengthy period.

Compliance Checking

A periodic check, stipulated in the contractual agreement with the provider, should be undertaken by the authority to ensure their partner organisation is delivering to the standards set in the contract. This assures the council that value for money is being achieved and its employees and those who encounter the service provider are protected.

Advice from the Health and Safety Executive is that when the service provider is appointed, the contract arrangements should include a robust framework for monitoring and review of their health and safety practice and performance. Once the contract commences the following should be evident:

- An on-the-ground monitoring regime, run either independently or in conjunction with the service provider, to ensure that those delivering the service are working to the agreed methods, and to review the continuing suitability of those working methods. The monitoring practices should always include observation and questioning and have an agreed compliance / risk scaling consistent with ISO 45001 Health and Safety Management Standard or equivalent. Monitoring should reflect the key health and safety performance indicators detailed in the contract
- A periodic review of all relevant accidents and incidents, ensuring that appropriate action has been taken, and that lessons have been learned / applied more widely
- Periodic and formal auditing of the health, safety, and welfare standards of the service provider

- A suitably authoritative contract safety review committee with representatives from the client (such as senior managers and elected members), the service provider and ideally any other parties affected by the contract, which will include the workforce¹.

Further useful information on managing refuse contracts as well as a number of case study examples can be found on the HSE's website at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/waste/services/index.htm>

As the employer, local authorities must ensure their refuse operations are conducted safely. This includes ensuring the policies and procedures are adhered to and are achieving the desired reductions in risk expected. A variety of compliance checks can be employed and some examples of these are detailed below. Regardless of the methodology adopted by the council, it is important that accurate records are maintained which can demonstrate if systems in place are adequate or otherwise.

- **Reactive Investigation** – Detailed investigations into adverse incidents and near misses to ensure controls in place at the time met the required standard. Subsequent remedial works should be undertaken, and thorough records should be kept
- **Proactive Spot Checks** – Regular checks to ensure standards, risk assessments, method statements and departmental policies are being adhered to / maintained
- **Proactive Record Checks** – Check records are accurate, up to date and filled in correctly
- **Proactive Self Checks** – Annually / Bi-annually assess systems for compliance and effectiveness
- **Proactive External Audit** – Independent audit of the management systems in use should be conducted at least every 3 years
- **Data Reviews** – Regular system reviews including lag data e.g. adverse incidents and claims statistics to identify trends

Disputes

The service level agreement and other contractual documentation relating to the outsourcing of the service should clearly set out the process to be followed by both parties in the event of a dispute. This way, both parties understand the steps to be taken and agree to these before the contract goes live. If the issue is unable to be resolved through the remedy process as set out in the agreement; then mediation or other pre-agreed form of negotiated discussion may be the next move.

Learning from colleagues in other authorities who have contracted out their services may also be helpful as they will understand which approach worked best for resolving problems.

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/waste/services/management.htm>

Further information

For access to further RMP Resources you may find helpful in reducing your organisation's cost of risk, please access the RMP Resources or RMP Articles pages on our website. To join the debate follow us on our LinkedIn page.

Get in touch

For more information, please contact your broker, RMP risk control consultant or account director.

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