

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **WASTE AND RECYCLING INDUSTRY SAFER IN 2016** *BLS Data Shows a 16 Percent Decline in Fatalities in 2016*

Arlington, VA – Today, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released 2016 final figures for industry and occupational fatality data. In its 2016 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Summary, the BLS reported that while fatalities of all U.S. workers increased in 2016, in the public and private waste and recycling industry, fatalities declined from 50 in 2015 to 42 in 2016.

“This should give our industry a little encouragement that our organizational commitment to a strong safety culture and our safety processes are having an impact. The National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA) and our members won’t stop looking for opportunities to improve and we will never accept any loss. Zero is possible,” said NWRA President and CEO Darrell Smith. “Since our Board of Trustees designated safety as a strategic initiative in 2015, NWRA has worked to provide its members with tools and outreach efforts including Safety Stand Downs and our Safety Professional Development Series, as well as collecting our own data from members to monitor trends in the industry. We are also preparing for additional programs in 2018.”

“In early 2016, NWRA convened an unprecedented industry-wide Safety Summit to significantly reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities by building out sustainable prevention measures and engagement processes for a stronger industry safety culture,” said NWRA National Safety Director, Anthony Hargis.

Over the past three years, NWRA and its chapters nationwide have successfully championed “Slow Down to Get Around” legislation, which is now the law in 16 states and under consideration in several more. These laws require that motorists slow down when waste and recycling collection vehicles are stopped and workers are getting on and off, just as motorists are required to slow down in construction work zones, or stop for school buses, or pull over for emergency vehicles.

“NWRA is completely committed to achieving a positive and robust safety culture industry-wide,” said Hargis. “We’re pleased to work with our members and our partners to move the needle on safety for our workers and the communities that our industry serves.”

NWRA and its members have undertaken numerous initiatives that represent a comprehensive approach to improving safety for workers in the waste and recycling industry, including:

- Hosting safety seminars in cities nationwide for haulers, processors and other stakeholders in the waste and recycling collection process;
- Development of safety manuals for use by drivers and workers in the industry;
- Creation of the first-of-its-kind Driver Certification program for waste and recycling collection vehicle operators;

- Temporary worker safety training;
- Safety Monday — A bi-lingual poster sent each week to member companies with important practical tips to prevent accident and injury;
- Commercial vehicle safety inspection briefings and demonstrations;
- Online safety webinars and education sessions at industry conferences to promote sharing of best practices; and,
- NWRA serves as the Secretariat for the waste & recycling industry's ANSI standards- covering the safe design, manufacture, maintenance and use of equipment used in the industry.

Fatalities declined at landfills and material recovery facilities, while they remained the same in the waste collection industry. The refuse and recyclable material collector fatalities also declined to 31 as did the fatal work injury rate (34.1 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers), however, this occupation stayed as fifth highest. NWRA is the standard developing organization for ANSI standards in the waste and recycling industry. Addressing the higher fatalities at the landfill, the ASC Z245 has begun the process of creating a standard on Landfill safety. The numbers released today demonstrate how the proactive efforts around the ASC Z245 are making the industry safer.

The BLS data on workplace injury and illness is published annually, and information on the waste and recycling industry is based on the U.S. Census Bureau definition of the waste and remediation services industry (NAICS Code 562) as "solid waste collection, hazardous waste collection, other waste collection, hazardous waste treatment and disposal, solid waste landfill, solid waste combustors and incinerators." A copy of the BLS announcement can be found at [WWW.BLS.GOV](http://WWW.BLS.GOV).

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#### **ABOUT NWRA**

The National Waste and Recycling Association represents the private sector waste and recycling services industry. Association members conduct business in all 50 states, and DC and include companies that manage garbage, recycling and medical waste, equipment manufacturers and distributors, and a variety of other service providers. For more information about NWRA, please visit [WWW.WASTERECYCLING.ORG](http://WWW.WASTERECYCLING.ORG).

#### **Contact:**

Brandon Wright  
National Waste and Recycling Association  
[bwright@wasterecycling.org](mailto:bwright@wasterecycling.org)  
202-364-3706

## CONTACT US

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@wasterecycling  
wasterecycling.org • 202-244-4700  
info@wasterecycling.org  
1550 Crystal Drive, Suite 804 Arlington,  
VA 22202