

## **New law to encourage Georgia drivers to slow down around waste and recycling trucks**

(Washington, July 7, 2015) - As of July 1st, a new law is in effect in Georgia requiring motorists to slow down when they are approaching garbage and recycling trucks. The law requires that a driver change lanes (if possible) or slow down by at least 10 miles an hour below the posted speed limit, or risk a penalty of up to \$250. Georgia is the 9th state to enact this potentially life-saving legislation.

Why is there the need for such laws? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, waste and recycling collection workers have higher fatality rates than police and firefighters. At the National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA), which represents America's private waste and recycling industry, we conducted a Harris Survey in 2014 that found while most Americans encounter garbage and recycling collection trucks on the road each week, only one-third of people slow down near these vehicles and nearly 40% are actually tempted to speed around them.

It is alarming that motorists, who are accustomed to stopping for school buses and pulling over to the side of the road when emergency vehicles approach, do not exercise the same caution behind the wheel when they are approaching vehicles that make frequent stops and that are performing an important service for our communities. No meeting, appointment, errand, sporting or social activity is that important that a worker's life should be put in danger because slowing down is inconvenient.

The good news is, in the same survey, when informed about the dangers to these workers on our roadways, 90% of survey respondents said they favored laws that would prevent injuries and fatalities by requiring drivers to slow down.

Across the nation, the NWRA has been promoting a multi-faceted initiative called "Slow Down to Get Around." Our member companies have been diligent in providing advanced safety training for drivers and those who hop-off the trucks to make collections. We have been working with our members and state legislatures across the nation to raise awareness on this vital traffic safety issue and to either enhance existing laws or to enact new Slow Down to Get Around legislation.

Here in Georgia, our statewide Chapter and member companies worked closely with State Representative Brett Harrell (R-Snellville) as he led the way to gain the needed support to protect our industry's workers. NWRA applauds the Georgia General Assembly and Governor Nathan Deal for making our community roadways safer.

Passing a law, however, is just the first step to making our roads safer. It took both new laws as well as a concerted effort to raise public awareness before there was widespread driver adoption of important highway safety laws such as seat belt use and the need to stop texting and "surfing" while driving.

With this law now in effect, we are asking all Georgia motorists, public safety agencies and the news media to spread the word to Slow Down to Get Around. It is literally a matter of life and death.

***Sharon H. Kneiss is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Waste and Recycling Association in Washington, DC.***