

# Fire in Waste Collection Vehicles – Guidance Material



Prepared for the benefit of Members of the Waste Contractors & Recyclers Association of NSW  
As at 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013

## **1. Purpose:**

To ensure the safety of waste collection vehicle operators, the community, environment and vehicles in the event of a fire occurring in the vehicle itself or in any non-dangerous goods included in the load.

Members should review this guidance material for consideration in the development of their own internal company policies and procedures with respect to managing fire in waste collection vehicles. Members will have obligations as a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) to consult with their Workers as per the Work, Health & Safety (WHS) Act 2011 and WHS Regulations.

## **2. Responsibilities:**

### ***Driver / Vehicle Operator:***

- i. To immediately assess the situation in the event of a fire.
- ii. To immediately extinguish the fire if suitably trained in fire emergency procedures (and safe to do so).
- iii. If required, call Emergency Services on 000 (NSW Fire and Emergency Services & NSW Police) and to then follow their instructions.
- iv. To contact Supervisor / Manager, report incident and co-operate with incident investigation.

### ***Supervisor/Manager:***

- i. To ensure appropriate incident investigation and notification paperwork completed.
- ii. To ensure that appropriate type and size of fire extinguishers are available for all waste collection vehicles, and that all Workers are trained in their use.
- iii. To ensure that fire extinguishers are appropriately maintained and tagged as per WHS requirements.
- iv. To ensure that the vehicles are maintained in a safe and operable condition to reduce the risk of fire.

## **3. Procedure:**

1. Stop vehicle in the safest location possible. Ideally this should be an open area away from traffic, environmentally sensitive areas such as waterways and flammable materials. Shut off engine and exit vehicle.
2. Assess fire to determine if it can be safely and quickly extinguished. Consider the size of the fire, materials in the truck, location and risk to self, others, vehicle & the environment.
3. a) If safe to do so, extinguish the fire as per table below which outlines the action to be taken dependent on the type of vehicle.

- b) If unable to safely extinguish the fire, immediately contact Emergency Services on 000, and then contact Supervisor / Manager. Wait for Emergency Services to arrive and follow their instructions.
4. Administer first aid if required (refer to section 4 below).
  5. Ensure traffic and any members of the general public in the area are warned and kept away from the vehicle.
  6. Once determined safe (i.e. fire controlled) assist in clean-up of incident site. This may include the proper lawful disposal of the waste material, including all material ejected and material still in the collection vehicle. Please note that the disposal site should be advised prior to tipping any material so that suitable preparations are made for the possible re-ignition of the fire when material is ejected.
  7. Supervisor to complete incident report with the Driver / Vehicle Operator.
  8. Investigation to occur and recommendations for actions to prevent recurrence. Where possible this should include contacting the waste generator (resident or customer) to explain that inappropriate material in their waste has resulted in a fire incident.

<b>Type of vehicle</b>	<b>Action required</b>
4.1. Front lift, side loader or rear lift waste collection vehicle	Compact the load with the ejection blade of the compactor in an attempt to starve the load of oxygen (if safe & practical to do so). The alternative is to assess the situation, find a safe place, eject the load and then drive the truck away to a safe distance (refer to guidance notes at point 4.4 in this table).
4.2. Bulk bin trucks (including Hook lift, Dino and Skip trucks)	Attempt to extinguish the fire using the fire extinguishers and/or attempt to place the bin on the ground to enable easier extinguishment. If the load is in a bulk compactor, assess the situation, find a safe place, place the bin on the ground and then drive the truck away to a safe distance (refer to guidance notes at point 4.4 in this table).
4.3. Tanker or combination unit	If the load is a Dangerous Good ensure compliance with all required DG procedures.
4.4. All vehicles	Non-liquid waste may only be ejected from the vehicle in a controlled environment. If waste is ejected from the vehicle, attempt to contain the area to prevent waste from blowing around and consider storm water drains or sensitive environments nearby. Drains must be protected. All ejected material must be cleaned up as soon as practical after the event and disposed in an appropriate manner.

**Note: If at any stage the Driver / Operator determines that they are unable to safely control the fire, they are to evacuate the immediate area and contact Emergency Services (000). If Emergency Services are called, their directions must be followed.**

#### 4. Basic First Aid:

Type of Injury / Exposure	Action Required
1. Inhalation of smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Remove self / any persons from the smoke or fumes to fresh air.</li><li>- Administer resuscitation if victim is not breathing (if appropriately trained)</li><li>- Obtain medical treatment.</li></ul>
2. Eye injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Where possible, remove any glasses; contact lenses should only be removed by the injured person and / or Emergency Service personnel.</li><li>- Hold eyelids open and flush with clean, running water (if available) for at least 15 minutes.</li><li>- Obtain medical treatment.</li></ul>
3. Fire Burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Immerse or flood affected areas with cold water for at least 15 minutes.</li><li>- Obtain medical treatment.</li><li>- Do not forcibly separate skin from any adhering material</li></ul> If appropriately trained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Bandage lightly with sterile dressing; and/or</li><li>- Treat for shock if necessary (blanket and recovery position)</li></ul>

**Note: The above table refers to basic first aid advice only. Each Company should have their own detailed First Aid Procedures.**

#### 5. Resources

- Appropriate Fire Extinguishers / Hoses
- First Aid kits
- Clearly identified and maintained exits and routes
- Access to emergency phone numbers and supervisors / manager numbers
- Evacuation point/s.
- Access to mobile phone / radio

#### 6. Training

- i) All workers to receive regular training in the operation and use of fire fighting equipment;
- ii) Workers to receive regular training & updates in these procedures; and
- iii) Training drills to be carried out at intervals in accordance with a suitable risk assessment.