

Discussion with the 2 operators of 1100 & 1280 litre wheeled bins on 26 May 2009

Present: Billy Hickey (BH) – Driver/Loader
 Kevin Hickey (KH) - Driver/Loader
 Keith Lawson (KL) - Safety Representative & EHO
 Christine Rowland (CR) – H&S Adviser

KL explained the reason for the meeting i.e. to establish whether the recently introduced temporary safe working procedure was being carried out in practice. This procedure requires both vehicles and both drivers to attend each site to ensure that two men are available to handle the heavy 1100 litre wheeled bins.

Findings:

BH & KH have been employed on the mini-recycling service for approximately 7 and 1.5 years respectively.

Whilst they were aware of the procedure it quickly became apparent that they were unable to comply with it due to the nature of their individual work schedules – one (KH’s) of the vehicles is used for 3.5 days every week to empty skips at various sites across the district. For the remaining 1.5 days that vehicle is used for glass collection. The other vehicle (BH’s) is used solely for glass collection.

Occasionally the two vehicles’ respective schedules are such that they are in the same locality. However the layout of several sites is such that the drivers are unable to park their vehicles close enough together to be of practical assistance to one another. As a result, they rarely work together in pairs, nor do they call one another for assistance. Moreover, if they did this, they claimed that they would never finish their rounds.

A copy of their schedules is outlined below.

Weekly schedule

Day	BH (Glass lorry)	KH (Glass/Paper/Skips)
Monday	Glass	Glass
Tuesday	“	Glass: Collect and tip at Buckden Paper**: Collect and off-load full body to EFH
Wednesday	“	Skips: Schools
Thursday	“	Skips Paper: collect ** from EFH & tip Paper: collect, tip and take empty body to EFH
Friday	“	Skips – PFH Glass: The Fox PH Folksworth - special trip because landlord won’t open earlier than 10am Paper: Collect remaining or, if time permits - Glass: help BH

NB. The operatives' workload increases significantly after Xmas or Bank holidays when both paper & glass bins are overflowing with whole and broken bottles spread around the bins.

Additional information

The men believe that their workload and associated problems would improve significantly if:

- ❖ The surface condition of and access to the sites was improved (this would not only make their manual handling tasks easier but also ensure that the bins could be lined up with the height of the lorries' lifting mechanisms);
- ❖ Wheeled bins currently used for cans were either discontinued for that purpose or moved to busier sites and used for glass collection (aluminium cans now be placed in domestic wheeled bins);
- ❖ The number of sites was reduced i.e. combine some of the little used sites with neighbouring areas/villages;
- ❖ Faults reported on their work schedules were addressed more quickly;
- ❖ Bins were repaired/replaced more frequently – many have broken lids, seized locks, worn brakes;
- ❖ An alternative site was found to replace Farcet village hall – the access is far too narrow (operatives frequently sustain cuts to their hands); the vehicle has insufficient space around it – the manufacturer's details specify a 5 metre gap which is impossible to achieve in this location; and the traffic is disrupted for some time while the bins are collected and emptied;
- ❖ The provision of 2 man working would provide a banksman for reversing and a lookout for those members of the public and children who wish to watch the process at close quarters; and
- ❖ Access was agreed with the landlord of The Fox in Folksworth before 10am (he has had problems with travellers so locks his gate and parks his vehicle in front of it which means that HDC vehicles can't get into the car park).

Keith Lawson FCIEH MSc: Safety Representative

Christine Rowland ACIS. CMIOSH: H&S Adviser