

Proper Handling of Trash

CTSI has recently received several injury claims resulting from the improper disposal and handling of trash. Trash may contain dangerous materials such as broken glass, metal pieces, used needles, or human waste. County employees whose job duties include handling and emptying trash should wear personal protective equipment and take proper safety precautions.

TIPS FOR HANDLING TRASH

Individuals handling trash should wear gloves, and if handling infectious materials, they should wear eye protection or face masks. They should also follow these tips:

- Do not allow trash containers to get more than three-quarters full
- Do not push down on the bag to remove air
- Clean up spilled food or leading liquids immediately to prevent slips or falls
- Use waterproof garbage bags
- Place broken glass and plastic in designated waste containers

REMOVING A TRASH BAG

To remove a plastic bag from a trash container, tie the bag at the top before removing it from the trash can. Then tip the waste container slightly to the side to reduce suction and make the bag easier to remove. Pull the bag slowly and evenly out of the trash can using both hands. The bag should not be lifted straight out of the container to help prevent back strain. Use a two-wheeled dolly to move trash bags to the dumpster. Avoid allowing the bag to come into contact with your body in case it contains broken glass or sharps.



PLACING TRASH IN A DUMPSTER

Use proper lifting techniques when placing trash in a dumpster. Trash bags can be heavy, especially those containing food waste. Back strain and other lifting injuries make up the bulk of trash-related workplace injuries. To place a waste bag in a dumpster, open and secure the lid or door of the dumpster first. Face the dumpster while lifting the bag to avoid unnecessary twisting. Lift the bag with both hands being sure to lift with your legs and not your back. Do not lift the trash bag over shoulder height. Use a step platform if necessary, and never climb in a dumpster.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

CTSI offers a webinar on handling Bloodborne Pathogens as part of its MSHA courses available at www.ctsi.org. The webinar covers best practices for disposing of infectious materials. County employees should wear PPE and take proper precautions when handling trash. For more information, contact CTSI Loss Prevention at 303 861 0507.