Welcome

David Murphy

Chair, EBC Solid Waste Management Committee

Vice President, Tighe & Bond, Inc.
The National Perspective

David Biderman

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Solid Waste Association of North America
Impact of COVID-19 on the Solid Waste Industry - The National Perspective

David Biderman
Executive Director & CEO
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• Largest association for the waste & recycling sector in the U.S. & Canada
  • 10,000+ individual members
  • 47 chapters, including Southern and Northern New England chapters
    • https://www.sneswana.org/
    • https://nneswana.org/
• Members in private and public sectors
• Core programs focus on education, research, advocacy and safety – and seek to improve the professionalism and image of the entire industry
• U.S. representative to ISWA
We need to recognize the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented crisis with significant public health and economic impacts.

There is no playbook for how to respond to the pandemic:
1. Transparency/Communications
2. Honesty
3. Collaboration
4. Expect the unexpected
Initial Actions

SWANA immediately recognized the transformational nature of the pandemic and pivoted to helping employers and employees adjust and respond:

1. Persuading governmental authorities to designate the waste industry as “essential”
2. Providing documentation to workers to prove they are essential
3. Developing a website for COVID docs/communications/news
4. Weekly webinars and frequent outreach to members and media
Waste & Recycling is an Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce

- Urging U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to prioritize solid waste industry for PPE & determine industry eligibility for reimbursement for excess residential waste & bankrupt customers
- Working with others – EPA, ISRI, KAB, TRP
- Outreach to media re changes to waste and recycling programs during pandemic
  - Thank you to the sanitation worker!
- Resources developed and shared
COVID-19 Response – Worker Safety

SWANA is reinforcing guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, WHO, and OSHA

- Solid waste and recyclables are not an effective vector for transmission
- New **CDC Fact Sheet** - Waste Collection/Recyclers
- Solid waste employees should be protected from COVID by wearing appropriate PPE (e.g., gloves)
  - There have always been pathogens (Hepatitis B, AIDS) and needles in the trash
  - Some state and local governments have required facial coverings for essential employees; others are recommending them

We are urging employers to provide PPE, modify operations to provide social distancing, educate re personal hygiene, and implement changes if someone is sick or someone in a worker’s household is sick.
Public’s Role Protecting Solid Waste Workers

Because there has been a 5-30% increase in residential waste/recycling tonnage, SWANA is explaining to general population what they can do to help protect solid waste collection workers

• All trash should be in carts/containers or closed bags
  • No loose tissues, wipes, etc.

• All recyclables should be in a cart/container
  • Don’t want loose cardboard on the curb

• Please delay Spring Cleaning!!!!

• PPE Litter – put used gloves/masks in the trash, not recycling
PPE Litter Threatens Public Health and the Environment!
Effective Outreach to Media

SWANA has been very visible in national and local media communicating these messages

SWANA records significant increase in collection fatalities
Industry association reminding solid waste employees to be diligent in complying with safety rules

SWANA Releases Guidance to Help Protect Waste and Recycling Workers

Tips for keeping garbage and recycling handlers safe during COVID-19
Some U.S. communities (80-90%) suspended curbside recycling, bulky, or yard waste programs
• More than half of them have restored these programs
NYC has suspended curbside organics for a year due to budget concerns
Haulers have parked trucks, reduced OT, reduced Cap Ex, laid off or furloughed workers
• Some companies have increased pay to front-line
Safety: Employers are providing front-line workers & others with PPE, sanitizer, wipes
• Daily truck cleaning – wiping down high touch areas (door handles, knobs, steering wheel)
• No more drivers’ meetings
• Changes to lunch and break rooms
• Minimize worker interaction between shifts
• Social distancing – not easy in a truck
  • Helper minimizing time in the cab
  • Supervisors driving helper to route
Many recycling facilities are making operational changes to provide social distancing and protect workers

- Installing plexiglass separators between pickers
- Separating pickers on lines
- A handful of facilities have closed because they couldn’t protect workers
  - Paper mills in U.S. are begging for material
  - **Value of OCC is over $100/ton** – shutdown of businesses/stores eliminated major source of recovered paper
COVID-19
Impact on Disposal Facilities

Disposal facilities have been impacted and face a variety of safety challenges

- Disposal volumes are down nationally and in the Northeast U.S.

- Drop off centers – these facilities have seen a sharp increase in customers
  - Many donation centers (Goodwill) are closed
  - Need to keep customers 6 feet away from other customers and staff
  - Urging customers to wear masks
  - Some communities suspended curbside recycling collection – adding to burden
SWANA believes the U.S. is past “peak residential” and as businesses re-open, a new normal will slowly emerge

• Expect slow decrease in residential waste & increase in commercial waste and overall disposal volumes

• There will be great variety by state/city in how quickly the new normal happens, and what it looks like
  • No one has a working crystal ball
  • Boston will recover differently from western Mass
  • Will all small haulers recover?

• Will all front-line waste workers get access to testing?

• Mental health challenges

• Office staff – how/when do offices re-open, and how will things be different?

Economic and fiscal changes will impact operations & services

SWANA is developing industry resources to help employers & employees plan for new normal – virtual SWANApalooza
• SWANApalooza will be held on June 23-25 in the afternoon and will include live and recorded Keynote Sessions, Technical Sessions, a virtual exhibit hall, and lots of opportunities for interaction.

• Content includes COVID, recycling, landfill issues, LFG, WTE, safety, and technology.
The issues that we focused on B.C. (Before COVID) will soon return to the front burner:

**Recycling** – contamination/new EPA goals/congressional support ($$$)

**PFAS** – high profile issue re landfill leachate & WWTPs in New England and nationally

**Worker Safety** – waste collection has 5th highest worker fatality rate in U.S.

**Disposal Capacity** – Hot topic in Mass

**Recruiting/Retaining Workers** – was a big issue when 3.5% unemployment
Sanitation Workers Support Fund

• Established by Glad and SWANA
• $200,000 fund provided by Glad
• Provides financial assistance to front-line solid waste & recycling collection workers
  • Have tested positive for COVID-19
  • Were laid off because of COVID-19 and continue to be unemployed
  • An immediate family member was a front-line solid waste or recycling collection worker and passed away as a result of the coronavirus
Glad purchased advertising on broadcast and cable television in May to support the Fund and thank front-line sanitation workers for their heroic work.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loJ8VcNI43w
THANK YOU
The Regional Perspective

Steven Changaris

Vice President, Northeast Region
National Waste & Recycling Association
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry

An EBC “Social Distanced & Responsible” Webinar

Steve Changaris
NWRA NE Region Vice President
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry

• What you will hear from me today

• Steve’s Phase MA/Northeast Report of the Covid-19 Pandemic

• Four Phases:
  • Pre-pandemic
  • The Iceberg hits
  • What associations are for
  • Re-opening – crystal ball future thoughts
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry

• Pre-pandemic

• 2020 Regular, very busy start of the year

• Economy strong; Disposal Capacity Issues; Bottle Bill; MASWP; C&D Summit; EPR; Recycling Issues; Trash Taxes for Recycling; Landfill Siting Prohibitions; PFAS; Nationalized Recycling Issues; 2/16/20; EJ; 3/10/20 First Coronavirus work email (refillables)
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry
The Iceberg Hits

• All that background noise, news and “away from me” scales on the eyes blinders fell away in an instant -- Covid-19 times had arrived

• The “what if” we had a outbreak in the MA industry question was asked

• 3/12 and 3/13 trips to Hartford
It seems as though the governing folks in my neck of the woods are “down with that” thinking too – no travel. The CT legislature is “not meeting in venue”. Mayor Walsh in Boston has cancelled the St. Patrick’s day parade – is looking to do the Boston Marathon too most likely. Over in NY Gov Cuomo has New Rochelle locked down with the national guard; and Mayor DeBlasio in NYC has shut down the great white way live theatre and there will be no St. Patrick’s day parade in the Big Apple either!

All that said, just traveled doing an early 8:00am FOI pick up in Hartford – and then did an information/material drop at a member’s facility. Limited contact with people; but the maintenance worker at the Hartford DEEP had his disinfectant bottle and rag going on all the door knobs and counter surfaces in sight. The DEEP woman I spoke with said, the DEEP office is likely to shut down “soon” like the legislature has.

The mania aspect of all this a bit... in hindsight I hope -- a “bit much”... time will tell eh!

Taken from text of a 3/12/20 Steve Changaris email
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry

What associations are for

- Member needs emerge
- NWRAs response – regional
- Engagement of Elected & Regulatory Officials
- Essential industry
- Hours of Service
- Focus on Employees
- Public Relations
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry

Based on current knowledge, we are not dealing with a true airborne hazard. Droplets fall quickly to the ground or other surfaces where they remain. Touching those surfaces and then touching one’s face is the true risk and should be avoided. What are these surfaces? They could be anything. Therefore, our workers should assume that all surfaces could be contaminated by COVID-19. This includes the waste, cart handles, truck body, door handles etc. Our workers are wearing gloves and washing and sanitizing their hands often to minimize the risk. At this time, we are not aware of any significant public health hazard from waste operations.

Message to employees: PROTECT YOURSELF FROM COVID-19

- Maintain social distance
- Wipe down equipment at the beginning and end of every shift, paying special attention to high touch surfaces such as door handles, grab bars, steering wheels,mirrors and buttons and switches
- Wash your hands
- Use your gloves
- Don’t touch your face
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry
Mid-Pandemic Crisis Developments

- Residential and Commercial Work
- Technical Issues Arise
- PPE supply availability
- Testing
- Work Practices
- Communication Pathways Evolve
- Hazard Pay Issue Emerges
- Employer Covid-19 Liability Issues
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The New Normal

- Maintain Covid-19 safety practices integrity
- Plan and prepare for “opening-up” phases of commercial work
- V-shaped recovery now?; or swoosh recovery in 3rd quarter, later
Observations and Thoughts

• Waste and recycling industry has proven resilient in practice as an essential pandemic industry
• Many aspects of our operations helped us manage through the pandemic; some others have proven to be more difficult to manage
• Toilet paper run and AFPA highest tissue production metrics link
• The Covid-19 page will turn; and we will pivot back to known issues that confront the industry and address the new ones that come along
Impact of Covid-19 on MA/Northeast Waste and Recycling Industry

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The Massachusetts Perspective

Gretchen Carey

President, MassRecycle

Recycling and Organics Coordinator, Republic Services
MassRecycle and Covid-19

Gretchen Carey
President
30 years ago: starting recycling systems in municipalities

Today:
❖ Supporting cleaner recycling
❖ Reuse of furniture
❖ Food rescue
❖ Textile reuse
❖ Food waste diversion
Recent Challenges
China National Sword... and Massachusetts’ response

RecycleSmart

- **Metal**: Food and Beverage Cans (empty and rinse)
- **Plastic**: Bottles, Jars, Jugs and Tubs (empty and replace cap)
- **Glass**: Bottles and Jars (empty and rinse)
- **Paper & Cardboard**: Mixed Paper, Newspaper, Magazines, Boxes (empty and flatten)

**NO!**
- Do Not Bag Recyclables
- No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap (return to retail)
- No Food or Liquid (empty all containers)
- No Clothing or Linens (use donation programs)
- No Tangles (inc: hoses, wires, chains or electronics)

RecycleSmartMA.org

@RecycleSmartMA  RecycleSmartMA  Recycle-Smart-MA
Covid 19

Post office square, Boston
Municipal Drop-offs

CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE
Visit newtonma.gov/rrc for updates.
We apologize for the inconvenience.
Stay healthy and safe.

April 15, 2020 Webinar
Curbside Organics
Household Hazardous Waste Day
Municipalities are invested

Recycling IQ Kit
Food Rescue
Food waste/organics collection
Colleges and Universities
Reuse/ Donation

- Donation bins
Young Professionals
Fixit clinics... now online
Disposable vs Reusable
Litter
EPR
Commodity markets
MassRecycle.org

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Gunther Wellenstein  
City of Haverhill
Panel Discussion

Moderator: David Murphy
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