

**INITIAL NOTIFICATION OF WASTE & RECYCLING FATALITY -  
SKIP EXCHANGE (HOT SWAPPING)**

- Issued by HSE’s Waste and Recycling Team to the WISH Forum to assist timely promotion of key health and safety risks.
- The details are based on initial notification and where applicable, media coverage and do not fully reflect the detailed circumstances of the incident. The death has been treated as work related.
- The links to existing HSE and/or WISH guidance below are to help recipients to promote health and safety and should not be taken to imply details of cause of the incident.
- Initial notifications of fatal accidents will be communicated through this system only when deemed appropriate. The sum of initial notifications should therefore not be quoted in any form as fatality statistics for the sector. Official fatality statistics for the Sector will be published by HSE.

<b>Does not reflect end of year statistics</b>	
<b>Date issued</b>	02/10/20
<b>General nature of incidents</b>	Waste and recycling – workplace transport – hot swapping of skips
<b>Brief details of incident</b>	
<p>A skip lorry driver was killed during a skip exchange at a customer’s premises when one of two skips being lifted fell and struck the driver whilst he was on the lorry bed clearing debris. This method of exchanging skips is commonly referred to as “hot swapping” or “double stacking”.</p> <p>Hot swapping on vehicles not specifically designed to lift two skips is an unsafe practice as loads are potentially insecure and the operation places a high reliance on the vehicle operator’s judgement on how to stack skips and whether the skips are correctly matched/ inserted into each other. These types of operations also involve operators working at height to interact with the chains.</p> <p>HSE is very concerned about the practice of hot swapping due to the risk that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The skips may not be compatible and probably will not fit inside one another correctly;</li> </ul>	

- If either skip is damaged, the empty skip may bind when slotted into the loaded skip causing instability or offset loading;
- The waste material in the loaded skip may not necessarily compact or may not be evenly distributed and could give rise to skip instability;
- With raising and lowering two skips onto the skip loader it is difficult for the driver to establish if the load being lifted is within the Safe Working Load capacity of the work equipment.

These factors all place high reliance on the training, instruction, experience and judgement of the lorry operator. Employers are required to carry out risk assessment to ensure adequate controls are in place to prevent injury from the instability of skips and/or vehicle during lifting operations and it would be expected that alternative measures should be undertaken to exchange skips wherever practicable. Employees should be clearly informed and trained in these alternative procedures and monitoring should take place to ensure they are followed.

Where the employer can demonstrate that hot swapping is the only means to exchange skips, they will be expected to provide a written safe system of work addressing relevant control measures to address the risks including, but not limited to, those documented above. The employer should not rely solely on the experience and judgement of the driver or apply pressure on any driver to carry out an unsafe procedure.

**Links to relevant published guidance (HSE and Partnership publications) as key messaging**

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm>

[Workplace Transport Safety HSG136.](#)