

# Commercial and Industrial Trash Compactors

Many severe injuries are caused each year by improper use of trash compactors. Injuries such as amputations, lacerations, and even fatalities have been the direct result of trash compactor misuse. It is important that management institute specific safety controls and instruct employees as to appropriate safe practices to follow when using trash compactors.

## Management controls

- (1) Written safe operating rules should be reviewed with all employees who will use the compactor. Documentation of this training should be maintained in the employees' personnel files.
- (2) Appropriate safety signs for proper use of the compactor should be posted. Bilingual signs may be necessary in some geographical areas.
- (3) The "Emergency Stop Buttons" should be well labeled and located in a prominent, easy to reach location. If the compactor is equipped with a loading door, the door should be interlocked with the main power switch so that the compactor will not operate when the door is in the "open" position.
- (4) De-energizing and/or lockout procedures should be established and followed during maintenance and repair operations.
- (5) If a loading platform is necessary, it should be substantially constructed of noncombustible materials and have a nonslip surface.
- (6) The general public and untrained employees should be kept from the trash compactor room at all times.

## Safe practices

- (1) The compactor area of room should be kept locked at all times.
- (2) The compactor operating key should never be left in the machine when unattended. Only responsible, trained employees should be given keys.
- (3) The entire area (especially the floors) surrounding the compactor should be kept clear of debris and other materials at all times.
- (4) Employees should never place hands and arms, or climb into the compactor. Long-handled hooks and rods should be used to clear jams. When performing such operations, the compactor should be de-energized.
- (5) All point of operation guards should be kept in place at all times. If maintenance/repair operations require their removal, guards should be replaced prior to the restart of the compactor.
- (6) Electrical control box doors should be kept closed and secured at all times.
- (7) Never hose down the compactor when the power is on. Turn the power switch to the OFF position and remove the key prior to washing the compactor or the immediate floor area.
- (8) Before compacting garbage, the interior of the bin should always be checked.

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- (9) Stand well back when dumping refuse into the compactor and when compacting trash. Safety glasses equipped with side shields should be worn during these operations.
- (10) Before compacting, the operator should note the location of the emergency STOP button(s).
- (11) Fluorescent lighting tubes or glass should not be compacted unless they are enclosed in cardboard cartons.

The loss prevention information and advice presented in this brochure are intended only to advise our insureds and their managers of a variety of methods and strategies based on generally accepted safe practices, for controlling potentially loss producing situations commonly occurring in business premises and/or operations. They are not intended to warrant that all potential hazards or conditions have been evaluated or can be controlled. They are not intended as an offer to write insurance coverage for such conditions or exposures, or to simply that Great American Insurance Company will write such coverage. The liability of Great American Insurance Company is limited to the specific terms, limits and conditions of the insurance policies issued.  
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