

Health and Safety Report: Waste Collection Operations in Bevendean Place (Auckland Drive to Hornby Road)

Introduction:

This report presents the findings of a Health and Safety (H&S) assessment in the area between Auckland Drive and Hornby Road. Although referred to as "Bevendean Place" for ease of reference, this is not a formally named area. It consists of residential streets with over 100 houses, characterized by steep banks, narrow access points (slopes and steps), and long walking distances. These features present several risks to waste collection operatives. The assessment was initiated due to recurring operational issues reported by staff, specifically regarding injuries and inefficiencies.

The review was conducted to identify hazards and propose actionable solutions to mitigate risks and improve safety, efficiency, and collaboration with residents and other departments. This problem has persisted for over a year, with an increasing number of incidents related to manual handling and slips, trips, and falls. According to the HSE, waste collection workers face some of the highest rates of musculoskeletal injuries and accidents in the waste and recycling sector. Our review seeks to align with HSE and WISH guidelines to ensure the health and safety of operatives.

Purpose of this Report:

The goal of this assessment is to propose practical, cost-effective solutions that address the specific risks associated with waste collection in this area while also exploring broader applications to other similar locations. The report will be submitted to senior management and operational teams for discussion and further development.

Methodology:

The area was divided into sections, focusing on different access points such as slopes and steps, to ensure a detailed assessment of each. Consultation was carried out with waste collection operatives who work in the area, supervisors, and representatives from the Housing and Highways departments. My experience as an H&S Business Partner, alongside site visits and risk assessments conducted with staff, informed this evaluation.

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Identified Hazards and Risks:

1. Slopes:

- *Risk of Slips and Falls:* Steep banks, particularly at angles of 15–20 degrees, become highly slippery in wet conditions, increasing the risk of falls.
- *Physical Strain:* Operatives frequently need to maneuver wheelie bins (weighing up to 90 kg when full) up and down these slopes, leading to fatigue and risk of musculoskeletal injuries.

2. Steps:

- *Trip Hazards:* Narrow steps, typically 70 cm wide, create a significant risk of tripping when handling heavy bins.
- *Injury from Lifting:* Lifting bins up or down steps increases the likelihood of musculoskeletal injuries.

3. Long Walking Distances:

- *Fatigue:* Operatives often need to transport bins over distances of 100–150 meters, which causes fatigue and heightens the risk of injury.
- *Time Inefficiency:* The long distances also extend the duration of collection rounds, impacting productivity.

Proposed Solutions:

1. Section-Based Solutions: Each section will be addressed individually, focusing on:

- The installation of ramps or drop kerbs, where feasible, to reduce manual handling risks on slopes.
- Potential establishment of bring sites (community bin collection points) to minimize long-distance manual handling. These sites should be placed strategically to balance convenience for residents and operational efficiency.

2. Resident Collaboration:

- Encourage residents to bring their bins closer to the main road on collection days to reduce the strain on operatives.
- Community engagement will be key to communicating new procedures and gathering feedback.

3. Operational Adjustments:

- Increase the frequency of collections in high-risk areas to reduce the weight of bins.
- Investigate the feasibility of wheelie bin handling aids, such as trolleys or bin pullers, to reduce the physical strain on operatives.

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Pros and Cons of Solutions:

- **Ramps/Drop Kerbs:**
 - *Pros:* Reduced physical strain, improved safety.
 - *Cons:* High cost and may require planning permission or highway modifications.
- **Bring Sites:**
 - *Pros:* Reduces the distance operatives must walk with heavy bins.
 - *Cons:* Potential for traffic hazards at collection points; requires resident compliance.
- **Increased Collection Frequency:**
 - *Pros:* Lighter bins reduce injury risk.
 - *Cons:* Higher operational costs and potential disruption to collection schedules.
- **Wheelie Bin Handling Aids:**
 - *Pros:* Lower risk of manual handling injuries.
 - *Cons:* Location not suitable.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- **Residents:** Active participation from residents is essential for the success of these solutions. Non-compliance or inability to move bins closer to collection points will need to be addressed through continued communication and support.
- **Housing and Highway Maintenance Departments:** Collaboration with these departments is crucial for the construction of ramps, drop kerbs, and other physical modifications to improve access for operatives. Such changes could also benefit residents, particularly those with mobility issues.
- **Bin & boxes team:** The involvement of the Bin & Boxes Team is critical to addressing access and containment challenges in this area. Their expertise in container types, distribution, and suitability can support efforts to reduce manual handling risks and improve overall efficiency.

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Future Considerations: This assessment may be applicable to other areas with similar topographical and logistical challenges. A further review could explore how other local authorities handle waste collection in challenging environments, possibly offering insights into alternative solutions.

Conclusion: The assessment of the Auckland Drive to Hornby Road area (referred to as Bevendean Place) highlights significant risks to waste collection operatives, including steep slopes, narrow access points, and long walking distances. By adopting a section-based approach, collaborating with residents, and considering infrastructure improvements, we can reduce the risk of injuries and improve operational efficiency.

Further exploration of bin handling aids and collection frequency adjustments could also provide effective long-term solutions.

Completed by



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