

MEMO



To: Sharon Kneiss, National Waste & Recycling Association
From: Viviana Solorzano, Nielsen
Date: November 20, 2014
Re: Executive Summary Report – QuickQuery

The following information provides insights into Americans' awareness, attitudes and opinions about the garbage collection profession and garbage truck service vehicles.

Key Findings

Despite the fact that a majority of Americans see garbage trucks at least once a week, and over one-in-six Americans see them on the road every single day, they seem to be given the least amount of respect compared to other service vehicles. Americans are more tempted to speed around garbage trucks than any other kind of service vehicle, and, alarmingly, garbage trucks are dead last in terms of which kind of known service vehicle Americans will actually slow down around when encountered on the road. Most distressingly, less than one-in-ten Americans are aware that garbage collection has the highest fatality rate compared to firefighting, police work, and ambulance work.

There may be some hope of raising awareness around this, as 85% of Americans are already in favor of laws protecting garbage collectors on the roadways and when presented with the fact from USBLA that garbage collection does in fact have the highest fatality rate among service professions, more indicated their support for such laws (90%).

Detailed Findings

1 Which one of the following professions do you believe has the highest fatality rate? Even if you are not sure, please make your best guess. [All Respondents, n=2,012]

Less than one-in-ten (8%) Americans believes that **garbage collection** has the highest fatality rate among the four professions listed (46% selected firefighting, 43% chose police work, and 3% think paramedic work has the highest fatality rate).

Gender differences

- Men (10%) are twice as likely as women (2%) to believe garbage collection has the highest fatality rate compared to firefighting, police work, and paramedic work.

Possible headline – Less than one-in-ten Americans know that garbage collection has the highest fatality rate compared to firefighting, police work and paramedic work.

2 How often do you see these vehicles on the road? [All Respondents, n=2,012]

Nearly nine-in-ten (88%) see garbage trucks on the road **at least once a week**, and one-in-six (16%) Americans see garbage trucks on the road **every day**.

Age differences

- Those ages 45+ are more likely than those ages 18-44 to see garbage trucks on the road **at least once a week** (92% vs. 84%, respectively).
- Those ages 35-64 (19%) are more likely than those ages 18-34 (11%) to see garbage trucks on the road **every single day**.

Gender differences

- Men are more likely than women to see garbage trucks on the road **every day** (19% vs. 12%, respectively).

Regional differences

- Those in the Northeast (22%) are more likely than those in the South (14%), the Midwest (16%), and the West (12%) to see garbage trucks on the road **every day**.

Possible headlines – A vast majority of Americans see garbage trucks on the road at least once a week, with one-in-six seeing them every day.

3 Which of the following service vehicles, if any, are you tempted to speed around (i.e., when they are stopped in front of you as you are driving)? [All Respondents, n=2,012]

Americans are tempted to speed around **garbage trucks** more than any other kind of service vehicle, with nearly two in five (38%) admitting this. Distant second is a school bus (8%), followed by a police car and fire truck (both 3%), an ambulance (2%), and other service vehicles (8%).

Gender differences

- Men are more likely than women to admit to being tempted to speed around garbage trucks they encounter on the road (42% vs. 34%, respectively).
 - Though there are no overall differences in age, men ages 65+ are far more likely than women ages 65+ to say they're tempted to speed around garbage trucks (49% vs. 27%, respectively).

Possible headline – Americans, particularly men, admit to being tempted to speed around garbage trucks more than any other kind of service vehicle on the road.

3_REBASE Which of the following service vehicles, if any, are you tempted to speed around (i.e., when they are stopped in front of you as you are driving)? [Drivers, n=1,829]

Americans drivers are tempted to speed around **garbage trucks** more than any other kind of service vehicle with over two-in-five admitting this (42%). Distant second is a school bus (8%), followed by a police car and fire truck (both 3%), an ambulance (2%), and other service vehicles (9%).

Age differences

- Those ages 18-34 (48%) are more likely than those ages 55+ (37%) to be tempted to drive around garbage trucks.

Gender differences

- Male drivers are more likely than female drivers to admit to being tempted to speed around garbage trucks they encounter on the road (45% vs. 38%, respectively).
 - Male drivers ages 65+ are far more likely than female drivers ages 65+ to say they're tempted to speed around garbage trucks (50% vs. 28%, respectively).

Possible headline – American drivers, particularly men, admit to being tempted to speed around garbage trucks more than any other kind of service vehicle on the road.

4 *Around which of the following service vehicles, if any, do you slow down while driving? Please select all that apply. [All Respondents, n=2,012]*

Only about one-third (32%) of Americans slow down around **garbage trucks**. Far more Americans hit the brakes around ambulances (77%), police cars (76%), fire trucks (72%), and school buses (69%).

Age differences

- Those ages 35+ (38%) are nearly twice as likely as those ages 18-34 (20%) to slow down around garbage trucks.

Gender differences

- Women are more likely than men to slow down around garbage trucks (35% vs. 29%, respectively).

Possible headline – Only about one-third of Americans actually brake for garbage trucks.

4_REBASE *Around which of the following service vehicles, if any, do you slow down while driving? Please select all that apply. [Drivers, n=1,829]*

Just over one-third (36%) of American drivers slow down around **garbage trucks**. Far more drivers hit the brakes around ambulances (85%), police cars (84%), fire trucks (80%), and school buses (76%).

Age differences

- Drivers ages 35+ (40%) are far more likely than those ages 18-34 (24%) to slow down around garbage trucks.

Gender differences

- Female drivers are more likely than male drivers to slow down around garbage trucks (40% vs. 32%, respectively).

Possible headline – Just over one-third of American drivers actually brake for garbage trucks.

5 *How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following the following statement? [(All Respondents, n=2,012)]*

I am in favor of laws protecting garbage collectors on this country's roadways.

A majority (85%) of Americans are in favor of this, with one-third (33%) strongly agreeing with this statement.

- Those in the Northeast (86%), in the South (87%) and in the Midwest (86%) are more likely than those in the West (80%) to be in favor of these types of laws.
- Younger adults, ages 18-34, and those more middle aged and older, ages 45-64 (both 87%), are all significantly more likely to say they are in favor of this than those ages 65+ (79%).

Possible headline – A majority of Americans are in favor of laws protecting garbage collectors on this country's roadways.

6 *According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, refuse/recycling collection (i.e., garbage collection) has the highest fatality rate of public service professions, meaning that more deaths per 100,000 workers occur in each year in that profession than other professions.*

Given this information, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? [All Respondents, n=2,012]

I am in favor of laws protecting garbage collectors on this country's roadways.

Once the information from the USBLS was presented, more Americans (90%) indicated they were in favor of laws protecting garbage collectors, with over two-in-five (48%) now strongly agreeing with this statement.

- Younger adults, ages 18-34 (92%), are more likely to say they are in favor of this than those ages 65+ (88%).
- Women are more likely than men to agree with this, given the new information (92% vs. 88%, respectively).

Possible headline – Upon being informed that garbage collectors have the highest fatality rate among public service professions (according to the USBLS) nine-in-ten Americans are in favor of laws protecting garbage collectors on this country's roadways.

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States from **November 11-13, 2014** among **2,012** adults ages 18 and older by Harris Poll on behalf of **National Waste & Recycling Association** via its Quick Query omnibus product. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Poll avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Poll surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Poll panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.