



# Organics Recycling Group

## Renewable Energy Association

### Health & Safety News Letter

Volume 2 Issue 2: April 2013

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#### Editorial

Looking through this edition of the newsletter it seems that we are continuously banging the same old drum. There continue to be too many fatalities in the waste industry. It appears that the last year has been one of the worst on record with 14 reported fatalities. Whilst the organics sector appears to be relatively safe we are contained in the same SIC code as the rest of the industry. If the government brings in legislation to tighten H&S controls on the waste industry it will hit the organics sector as hard as other sectors.

#### We are leading the way towards health & safety best practice

Following the merger between AfOR and REA I have been asked to start health & safety initiatives for the various other sector groups. Given that the REA has numerous sector groups and I have only a very limited knowledge of the technologies and hazards relating to these groups I am intending to start these one at a time. It seems best if this project can be started with the Biogas & Biomass group where we have the closest ties. If anyone has any ideas about this or you would like to help then please contact me.

#### In this edition

- Editorial
- Leading the way to H&S best practice
- Grasping the Nettle
- HSE Advice on Workplace Transport
- Quarterly H&S survey results.
- WISH Forum
- Building new sites.

#### Dangers arising from the construction of AD facilities.

We have received a comment from a member of the REA Biogas sector group regarding health & safety. This is in itself pleasing as it demonstrates that other people want to engage with our message. Whilst the comments received do not strictly fall within the waste industry they are none the less something which members of the ORG can influence and should be aware of.

The member supplies capital equipment for use on AD sites and has noticed when visiting sites that are still in the construction phase that there are a large number of breaches of health & safety regulations and best practice. Regrettably the construction of many small AD and composting sites are not notified to the HSE.

The HSE state that as these projects are not notified to them, then they do not know where the projects are located and unless an inspector finds such projects in the course of their general duties they cannot act. It is possible for members of the public to report these sites and in worst case scenarios there may be RIDDOR occurrences that draw these sites to the attention of the HSE.

We strongly recommend that when drawing up contracts for the construction of new sites or the installation of new equipment and facilities all members specify that health and safety best practice should be applied throughout the construction process. If in doubt a competent health & safety consultant should be used to coordinate these issues.

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## Grasping the Nettle — Jeremy Jacobs.

Three years have elapsed since AfOR as it was referred to before our recent merger to the Renewable Energy Association took up the challenge of addressing the issues concerning health and safety within the organics recycling industry.

The statistics for fatalities within the 'Waste' sector as a whole make for some grim reading with 120 deaths over the last seven years and 14 in the last year, with at least one of these within the biowaste sector. I am however very pleased with the response that we have had from our members to engage with us and the regulator on this crucial issue. The initiatives that we have taken has I hope galvanised industry into thinking harder about their individual obligations under the H&S at work act and their obligations to provide a safe working place for them and their employees, we should never take H&S for granted whatever our role may be within the business.

We have held three very successful 'open days' at member's sites which provided delegates with a combination of formal presentations followed by a site tour of a facility for critique purposes, this has proven to be a successful combination contextualising some of the issues discussed in the morning at the site visit. In addition the quarterly H&S newsletters are I hope providing useful signposting and guidance to members.

Our message is clear, looking after the safety and welfare of your employees pays back tenfold, in fact recent evidence has shown that for every £1.00 invested, your business will benefit either directly or indirectly by as much as £15.00.

Health and safety needs to be the norm not an add-on seen as an inconvenience, direction from senior management is a must for this to work. The Organics recycling Group one of the founding members of the Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum and is committed to continuing to drive up standards and promote safe working practices, our recent H&S publication which can be found HERE (<http://www.organics-recycling.org.uk/page.php?article=1753&name=Health+%26+Safety+at+Composting+Sites>) demonstrates this.

Please contribute to our quarterly survey request and respond to Gordon direct, this information is vital in order that we fill the gaps from this valuable feedback from industry, please contact Gordon (Gordon@r-e-a.net) for a survey form.

Thank you for your continued support and please do not hesitate to contact us with suggestions for improvements to our service

Kind regards

JJ

## Quiz from last edition—What do these signs mean



**Wear Protective  
Footwear**



**Wear Eye  
Protection**



**Wear Gloves**



**Wear Head  
Protection**



**Pedestrians  
Prohibited**



## [Workplace Transport.](#)

**Every year, there are accidents involving transport in the workplace, some of which result in people being killed.**

**People are knocked down, run over, or crushed against fixed parts by vehicles (eg HGVs, lift trucks and tractors), plant and trailers. People also fall from vehicles – whether getting on or off, working at height, or when loading or unloading.**

### **What do I have to do?**

Think about whether there is an easier, safer way of doing the job. Your risk assessment must consider all workplace transport activities such as loading and unloading. It will help if you:

look carefully at all the vehicles and people moving round your workplace  
mark the traffic and pedestrian movements on a plan so you can see where pedestrians and vehicles interact  
identify improvements that will reduce the contact between pedestrians and vehicles  
remember to include less frequent tasks, eg waste skip changes  
make sure you consider delivery drivers as they are particularly vulnerable

### **How can I do it?**

Consider each of the following areas:

#### ***Safe site***

Plan your workplace so that pedestrians are safe from vehicles  
Provide a one-way system if you can  
Provide separate routes for pedestrians and vehicles where possible  
Avoid reversing where possible  
Provide appropriate crossing points where pedestrians and traffic meet  
Use 'Highway Code' signs to indicate vehicle routes, speed limits, pedestrian crossings etc  
Make sure lighting is adequate where people and vehicles are working  
Make sure road surfaces are firm and even  
Make sure there are safe areas for loading and unloading  
Try to provide separate car parking for visitors as they may not know your site

#### ***Safe driver***

Train lift truck operators  
Reassess lift truck operators at regular intervals, eg every three to five years, or when new risks arise such as changes to working practices.  
Train drivers of other vehicles to a similar standard  
Make sure all drivers are supervised (including those visiting the site)

#### ***Safe vehicle***

Ensure vehicles are suitable for the purpose for which they are used  
Maintain vehicles in good repair, particularly the braking system, steering, tyres, lights, mirrors and specific safety systems  
Remove the need for people to climb up on vehicles where possible, eg by providing gauges and controls that are accessible from ground level  
Reduce the risk of falling when people have to climb onto a vehicle or trailer by providing well-constructed ladders, non-slip walkways and guard rails where possible  
Provide reversing aids such as CCTV where appropriate  
Fit rollover protective structures and use seat belts where fitted

**Find out more [More HSE advice on vehicles at work](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/) [[www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/)]**

## AfOR Accident and Incident Returns Quarter 4: 2012

As part of the REA’s commitment to support the HSE Waste Industry Safety & Health (WISH) initiative we are continuing to run quarterly health & safety monitoring surveys. By enabling us to identify accident trends, and therefore being able to avoid these accidents these surveys will in time contribute to the WISH objective of “creating safer, healthier workplaces”. The survey seeks to collect information on all accidents occurring within the organic waste sector of the waste industry (i.e. composting and AD), whereas the statistics compiled by the HSE relate only to the overall waste industry (SIC 38).

Unfortunately recent accident statistics for the overall waste industry are far from encouraging. With 39 deaths within the industry in the five years up to March 2012 and 14 fatalities in the current financial year we must urge everyone to be vigilant and report all incidents including near misses before they can escalate into injuries or fatalities.

Based on the evidence gathered from our surveys it appears that the organics sector is comparatively safe with very few reportable accidents and incidents. It is hoped that in the long term the results from these surveys will be used to identify accident and incidents within the organics waste sector, and enable industry in partnership with the HSE to devise ways of reducing these accidents. As an interim measure, using the data gathered so far, the ORG has agreed with the HSE that we will be including in our health & safety newsletter various HSE tool box presentations that are relevant to the accidents and incidents that are reported in our surveys.

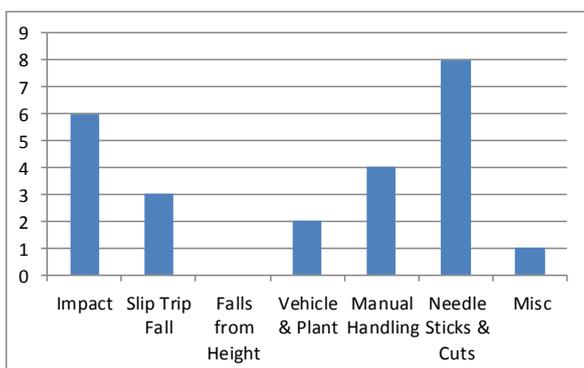
This quarter’s accident & incident survey has not brought in as many results as we might like however the information gathered continues to be of value. Within the current survey, we received **17 returns eight** (47%) of these reported no accidents or incidents on site. The remaining nine returns showed a total of 23 accidents and incidents, of which none were reportable under RIDDOR. The total number of employees covered was 745. No dangerous occurrences or work related diseases were reported, within the survey. The results from this survey are shown in tables 1 & 2 below.

It is encouraging to note that nearly half of the responses showed no accidents or incidents. The results show that the highest accident numbers occurred in IVC / ABP composting with 10 (43%) reported occurrences. It is probable that this can be attributed to the relatively confined spaces involved in IVC/ABP facilities. Needle sticks & cuts were identified as the highest causal factors of injuries at eight (34%) occurrences.

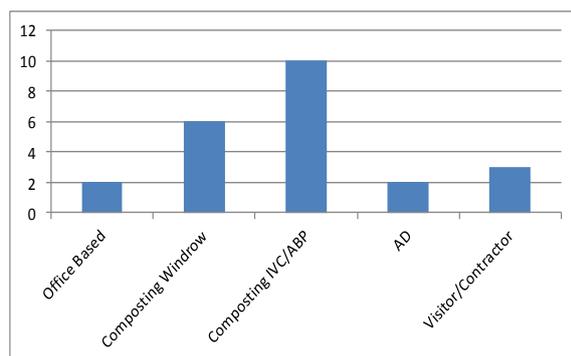
Given that there are numerous potential causes of disease within the organic waste sector it is interesting to note that there were no reported industrial diseases. This could be due to good preventative measures being taken at source or lack of diagnosis & reporting.

Thank you for your continued support with these surveys, we cannot stress highly enough the importance of the ORG gaining increased participation from industry to build our knowledge of the H&S issues which are impacting us the greatest.

**Table 1: Accidents by Causation Factor**



**Table 2: Accidents by Activity**



## WISHing for a Healthier and Safer future.

As I think we all know the waste management industry has a very poor health and safety record. Since April 2012 there have been 14 fatalities within the industry. For every fatality there are hundreds of injuries, dangerous occurrences and near misses. In 2009 the Health & Safety Executive launched the Waste Industry Safety & Health (WISH) initiative to help address these issues. The strategic objectives of WISH are:-

1. Reduce the overall RIDDOR reported accident rate by 10% year on year (2005/6 baseline) by December 2013.
2. Produce a standard format measuring the number of working days lost due to occupation health & safety incidents.
3. Gain widespread adoption of safety management systems such as those consistent with HSG 65 principles or compliant with OHSAS 18001
4. Improve attitudes within the workforce to health and safety.
5. Increase the level of competence within the industry.

WISH has been developed by a number of waste management industry organisations, including the Association for Organics Recycling. On February 7<sup>th</sup> approximately 150 delegates from all parts of the waste management industry attended the inaugural WISH forum in Solihull. Key note speaker for the event, Judith Hackitt CBE Chair of the HSE explained the industry's health and safety record and asked delegates to engage with WISH and share their experience and knowledge for the benefit of the whole industry.

Other speakers included Lawrence Waterman OBE who gave a presentation on health & safety lessons learnt from the London Olympics. Mike Short, National Health & Safety Officer for UNISON explained health & safety from a trade union perspective. The morning session concluded with a presentation by WISH Chairman Christopher Jones (Compliance Director at Cory Environmental) who reinforced the issues raised during the mornings presentations.

Following lunch delegates split into five workshop groups to discuss areas of interest including: Leadership, Competence, Worker Involvement, Creating Healthier Safer Work Places, and Customising Support for SME's. The leaders of each of these workshops subsequently reported back to the forum on barriers to their topic areas and actions required to overcome these barriers. All of the workshop leaders praised their groups and facilitators for being very active in identifying the barriers to development and actions to overcome these barriers in the individual subject areas. It was interesting to note that there were certain recurrent themes arising across these workshops. These recurrent themes included; a need to share best practice, lack of defined standards, the general perception of health & safety and inconsistency between regulators, insurers and training providers.

Following presentations by the workshop leaders there was an open panel discussion of the issues raised by these workshops.

The event was closed by Heather Bryant, Director of HSE Southern Division and Waste Management & Recycling Industry Strategy Lead. Heather reinforced the message of the day; the waste industry needs to improve its health safety culture.

In addition to the support given by REA staff before and during the event Gaynor Hartnell CEO of the REA has fully committed to support the WISH initiative. This support is demonstrated by the Organics Recycling Group of the REA continuing to run a vigorous health and safety program aligned to the objectives of WISH.

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