

SAFETY FIRST

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

May is Mental Health Awareness Month—an important time to shine a spotlight on the often-overlooked aspect of mental well-being. While discussions around mental health typically center on offices, schools, and healthcare settings, it's crucial to recognize its significance in every sector, including the solid waste and resource management industries.

This sector plays a fundamental role in maintaining the cleanliness and sustainability of our communities. However, the nature of the work in this industry can be physically demanding, emotionally taxing, and often underappreciated. From waste collection and recycling to landfill management and environmental conservation, employees in this field face unique challenges that can impact their mental health. When individuals are experiencing mental health challenges, that can impact their physical safety, particularly when distracted or stressed.

Mental Health Awareness Month serves as an opportunity to initiate meaningful conversations and implement supportive measures within the solid waste and resource management industry. Here are some steps that can be taken to prioritize mental well-being in the workplace:



- **Education and training.**
- **Access to support services.**
- **Workplace safety measures.**
- **Promoting work-life balance.**
- **Fostering a positive work culture.**

Experiencing a workplace injury to oneself or a colleague can create a mental toll. The fatality of a coworker or someone in the industry results in a significant negative mental health impact on a workplace. It is especially important for employers to provide mental health resources in these circumstances, and for supervisors and colleagues to provide a supportive work environment and check in with one another.

As we observe Mental Health Awareness Month this May, let us not forget the dedicated individuals working tirelessly in the solid waste and resource management industry. By prioritizing their mental health and implementing supportive measures, we can create a healthier and more resilient workforce, ensuring that they can continue to perform their vital roles in building sustainable communities for generations to come.

[Learn more in a blog post by SWANA.](#)

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