Trash Packer Strikes Worker

A 19-year-old worker died when he reached inside the hopper of a rear-loading trash truck while it was cycling trash.

He and his co-worker had been picking up old furniture in an alley. The co-worker, operating the controls, had looked away for a moment to observe traffic. When he looked back he saw the victim reaching into the hopper. The co-worker’s reaction was not quick enough to stop the packer panel before it hit the victim, who died at the scene from blunt force injuries to the head and neck.

No one knows why the victim did this. The co-worker said he and the victim often retrieved coins from old sofas, but not when the packer panel was moving.

Are you involved in a high-hazard operation? If so, you know that reaching into moving machinery to retrieve even a thousand dollar bill is not worth it. If you’re the one at the controls, no other concerns are worth taking your attention off a process that you must constantly monitor.