

August 24, 2021

Dear Governors,

The National Waste & Recycling Association (NWRA) is the voice of the private-sector waste and recycling industry that is essential to preventing the spread of disease and illness as well as maintaining the quality of American life. The delivery of waste and recycling services impacts all healthcare, residential, commercial and industrial properties on a daily basis.

On August 23, 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for all individuals 16 years and older¹. With the full approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, we ask that every state, county, and municipality encourage or require their workers, especially their municipal solid waste staff, to be vaccinated. NWRA already has encouraged the private waste and recycling industry to get vaccinated and we call on our municipal colleagues to do the same.

NWRA's request for public sector vaccinations comes after seven of the nation's top organizations, representing industrial hygienists, the infection preventionists, epidemiologists, infectious disease physicians, pharmacists, school nurses, and occupational health and safety scientists called on governors to require vaccinations for government employees².

During this national emergency, waste and recycling workers have been classified by the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) as "essential" upon the urging of NWRA and are listed under five different "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers" headings in the CISA 4.0 guidelines - "Healthcare / Public Health," "Critical Manufacturing," "Public Works and Infrastructure Support Services," "Hazardous Materials" and "Transportation and Logistics."

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-first-covid-19-vaccine>

² <https://apic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ID-Coalition-Letter-to-Governors-1.pdf> <https://apic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ID-Coalition-Letter-to-Governors-1.pdf>

The waste and recycling industry provides a critical service essential for society to function. Coronavirus outbreaks in the Baltimore³, ⁴ and Philadelphia⁵ solid waste workforces have resulted in delayed collection raising the potential for a wider public health crisis that our nation cannot afford to risk.

Thank you for taking this important public health stance by encouraging your staff to be vaccinated. Please contact NWRA's Vice President of Safety and Standards Kirk Sander at 202-364-3750 or ksander@wasterecycling.org to discuss this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk M. Sander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kirk" being the most prominent.

Kirk M. Sander
Chief of Staff and Vice President of Safety and Standards

³ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-ci-recycling-service-suspension-20200611-744kmq75rnbrdk4phtetj3lhki-story.html>

⁴ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-baltimore-looking-to-fill-gaps-in-trash-collections-20200615-hh5i2riezfwho7nzq4uq2fxfe-story.html>

⁵ <https://6abc.com/philly-trash-philadelphia-streets-department-covid19/6281913/>