

## **Waste Management of Orange County's Sunset Environmental Transfer Station Receives Cal/OSHA's Highest Safety Certification**

### ***Facility is the First Transfer Station in the nation to Receive Cal/OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Certification***

Waste Management of Orange County's (WMOC) Sunset Environmental Transfer Station received notification from the [California Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (Cal/OSHA) that it has achieved Star Certification as part of the [Voluntary Protection Program](#) (VPP), the highest safety achievement offered by Cal/OSHA.

WMOC's Sunset Environmental Transfer Station is the first transfer station in the United States to be recognized as a Cal/VPP Star site, and only the second facility in the municipal solid waste industry to achieve this certification, joining Waste Management's VPP Star Certified hauling district in Carlsbad, California.

Cal/OSHA estimates that there are 76 Star Certified sites in California, and approximately 2,000 Star sites (as designated by Federal/OSHA) in the United States.

"Waste Management's achievement of the prestigious Cal/OSHA VPP Star Certification is an accomplishment that very few companies in California have attained. This is a testament to their dedication to employee safety," said Iraj Pourmehraban, director of Cal/OSHA VPP Consultation Service. "All Waste Management sites in Orange County have been awarded our SHARP certification, and we are excited to see the first of these sites successfully take the next step to achieve VPP."

WMOC's Sunset Environmental Transfer Station has 40 employees who perform various jobs including collection drivers, maintenance technicians, equipment operators and recycling processing line sorters, in addition to office personnel. The facility provides services to the cities of Costa Mesa, Irvine, La Habra, Laguna Beach, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Santa Ana, and portions of unincorporated Orange County, and serves the public throughout the region.

"Our employees encounter a number of variables in their jobs, whether they are out on the road servicing customers or on site at our facility performing a number of different tasks," said Bill Bixler, district manager of WMOC. "Achieving VPP Star Certification is a tribute to our employees' careful actions and commitment to safety in performing their jobs."

The Star Certification is the result of a voluntary invitation for site visits and consultation by the state's work safety division, culminating in a multi-day audit in April. WMOC first applied for consideration for VPP in July of 2009 and spent the time between the application submission and the Cal/OSHA official VPP review conducting site improvements, safety program reviews and encouraging employee participation to meet the goals of the VPP program.

"By opening their doors to Cal/OSHA and inviting us in to review their safety programs and results, Waste Management demonstrates the highest level of commitment to employee health and safety," continued Pourmehraban. "An excellent working relationship between the local Union, the employees, and management was noticeable throughout the entire onsite team evaluation."

Cal/VPP is designed to recognize safety and health systems that effectively prevent and control occupational hazards. These systems go beyond ensuring that the minimal Cal/OSHA standards are met by providing the best feasible protection at that site. Cal/VPP emphasizes the importance of site-specific occupational safety and health programs and encourages their improvement. Cal/OSHA

provides recognition to those sites whose programs have achieved occupational safety and health excellence.

“Working safely is a key component of Waste Management’s culture,” Bixler said. “With safety as our priority, we invite agencies like Cal/OSHA in to evaluate our programs and practices, as well as the condition of our facility, to make sure we’re providing a safe environment for our employees and the community. We’re very proud of our employees for all the hard work they’ve done to enhance safety in the workplace, and we’re excited that Cal/OSHA has recognized us for these efforts.”

All Waste Management employees receive safety training appropriate for their positions within the company – whether serving as a driver of a collection vehicle, maintenance technician or within the office – and participate in regular safety refresher courses or additional trainings as needed. WMOC also has employee safety committees and a “Top Gun Safety Squadron” made up of employees with the site’s best safety records that provide recommendations for safety improvements, root cause analyses of incidents and share best practices.

“We make significant investments in the safety of our employees and the public, which have been recognized by Cal/OSHA through their Star Certification,” said David Ross, community and municipal relations director. “While some companies may reduce their safety budgets during challenging economic times, cutting corners on safety is simply not an option at Waste Management.”

For more information about Waste Management, visit <http://www.wmorangecounty.com>

*Waste Management, based in Houston, Texas, is the leading provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America. Our subsidiaries provide collection, transfer, recycling and resource recovery, and disposal services. We are also a leading developer, operator and owner of waste-to-energy and landfill gas-to-energy facilities in the United States. Our customers include residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers throughout North America.*

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