Refuse Operator Achieving Driving Success (ROADS):
Development, Implementation, Execution, & Results

Jorge Avitia, Solid Waste Operations Manager
City of El Paso Environmental Services Dept. (ESD)
Points to cover

• How did ROADS come about?
• Early implementation
• Adjustments and changes
• Results
• Opportunity for Improvement (OFI)
Why ROADS?

• Before ROADS:
  • High rate of incidents
  • No understanding of all aspects of the job
  • High turnover rate
  • Burnout
Why ROADS?

• The plan:
  • Prepare drivers for success.
  • Understanding of the department
  • Reduce incident numbers
  • Maintain adequate staffing
Pathway to ROADS

- TODAY:
  - ROADS ACADEMY
  - 4 DAYS OF CLASSROOM AND 8 WEEKS OF OJT WITH A TRAINER

- IN 2009, DRIVER ACADEMY CREATED:
  - 2 WEEKS OF CLASSROOM AND 6 WEEKS OF OJT

- IN 2007, ON THE JOB TRAINING (OJT):
  - DRIVER WITH A VETERAN DRIVER FOR A FEW WEEKS

- NO TRAINING:
  - KEY, MAP, AND GO DO IT
The “Dark” age

Brand new driver shows up to work

• “Here’s your keys, here’s your map.”

• No direction

• No support
The “Dark” age

• Lack of familiarity with rest of the department.
• Fails to create a culture of inclusion with the rest of the department.
The “Bronze” age

• First attempt at a training program
• Brand new drivers show up to work
  • “Meet John, you’ll be riding along with him while on probation to learn the job.
• After probation, new driver is assigned route.
The “Bronze” age

• Veteran driver must “babysit” without any incentive.
• New driver learns bad habits from veteran driver.
• New driver takes over veteran driver’s route.
• Veteran driver unhappy
The “Silver” age

- Overhaul of existing training program.
- Develop a training curriculum.
  - 2 weeks
  - Presented by senior staff, Department HR, and outside speakers

- Topics covered:
  - Solid Waste Ordinance
  - Fleet services
  - Landfill Operations
  - Safety
  - Customer Service
  - others
The “Silver” age

• After 2 weeks of training, driver takes a comprehensive test.
• Driver completes driving course to demonstrate competence with a unit.
• After test comes OTJ training as a Temp Truck Driver Trainee.
The “Silver” age

• Developed a “Training” region
  • Dedicated training supervisor
  • Smaller routes to train on.
• Volunteer trainers who will teach good procedures.
  • Incentives include smaller routes and different uniforms.
• First pick of premium vacation days.
The “Silver” age

• Driver is assessed on improvement throughout the 6 weeks.
  • If driver shows no steady improvement and trainer does not sign off on driver, they are released from the program.
  • If driver shows steady improvement, after 6 weeks of OTJ,
    • driver is assigned route
    • offered a permanent position with the department.
The “Current” age

- Reduced classroom time from 2 weeks to 4 days.
- Reduced guest speakers.
- Consolidated similar topics

- Increased OTJ training to 8 weeks.
- Trainees get more time to improve
- Up to an additional 4 weeks if deemed beneficial.
The “Current” age

• Incentives for volunteer trainers changed.
  • Different uniforms no longer an incentive
  • Volunteer Trainers are granted a 5% pay increase while they serve the role of trainer.
• Routes increased.
  • Better prepare trainees for real world scenarios.
Stats 2012-Present

Attendee Count

Average participation count – 9 per Academy Session
Stats 2012-Present

• Total Number of participants – 266
• Repeat participants – 5
• Current full-time staff that have completed ROADS – 81%
• Average time to complete ROADS – 2.5 months
Stats 2012-Present

• 31% ROADS graduates stayed permanently with the department.
• < 1% were released before graduating.
• 7% ROADS graduates transferred to another department.
• 61% ROADS graduates resigned.
Challenges

• More tracking
• ROADS Academy Attendance
• Retention
• Incidents from Recent graduates
• Route completion times