

Waste Picker Health & Safety

Waste pickers from Accra, Ghana, were surveyed to understand the main occupational health challenges and hazards they face. In total, 119 workers participated, 39 of them worked in landfill and 80 were street waste pickers; 54 were women, 62 men and three with no identified gender. Here's what we learned:

General information about the waste pickers surveyed:



- Most landfill waste pickers were women.
- Most (90%) of the landfill waste pickers rated their own health between "poor" and "good"



- Most of the street pickers were men
- Most of the street pickers (91%) rated their own health between "average" and "very good"

Workers' illness or injury affects their ability to work & earn a living:



41% of all workers related their last illness or injury to work



62% of those who had been ill or injured had had to miss a day or more of work as a result

The majority of workers surveyed (90%) reported experiencing ergonomic hazards while at work:



82% reported exposure to biological hazards.



62% reported exposure to chemical hazards.



Street waste pickers (95%) reported exposure to physical hazards.

Informal Workers & the Ghana National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)

Informal workers were also interviewed about their ability to access the National Health Insurance Scheme



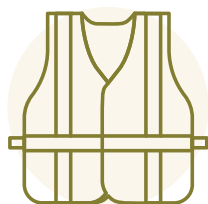
Only 8% of waste pickers were members of the NHIS. This means they have to pay out of pocket to access health services

Close to one-third of waste pickers surveyed reported experiencing violence and harassment at work:



28% of all workers reported exposure to violence and harassment at work, but this was more frequently reported by street waste pickers (35%).

The majority of waste pickers surveyed use protective equipment at work



100%
Landfill pickers



91%
Street pickers

Workers’ health measures to support waste pickers should include:

- safer and healthier public spaces in which to work;
- provision of personal protective equipment which should be financed by those who profit from the work of waste pickers;
- access to social protection to protect workers from loss of income when they are ill or injured;
- universal access to quality health services and medicines.