



# City of Bunnell Success in Safety Story

## When It Comes to Safety, Pedestrians Can Become Creatures of Habit



In his career and as director of the city's Solid Waste Department, Mitrano says he has learned a few things. He knows that his drivers spend more than a third of their average working day driving in reverse. And he knows that most people pay little attention to the beeping sound of a large truck backing up. In fact, research published years ago by NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) concluded that people get used to the sound of alarms, not taking them as seriously as they should. Mitrano says his drivers see proof of this every day.

"Sometimes you see people in your rear view mirror. They hear you backing up. They're waiting to give you the right of way. You're waiting to let them go by. Finally you decide you're going to move the truck—just as they decide to try and beat you across the street. You look back again and they're gone. Maybe you spot them on your monitor screen, maybe not. But if your radar picks them up, then you've got time to put your foot on the brake. And a stopped truck is a safe truck. Plain and simple."

## At the End of the Day, It's Up to Drivers to Take Safety Very Seriously

Situations like this point to another conclusion from the NIOSH report: Drivers who rely on backup beepers for safety can "lose the perception of responsibility for vigilant behavior." Mitrano says it's not unusual for some drivers to get lulled into complacency thinking that as long as their beeper is going off, people will get out of the way. The in-cab audible and visual alerts of the PRECO radar system make sure that complacency doesn't set in.



## Good Drivers + Good Equipment = Good Safety

Mitrano is proud of the fact that his department has gone more than six years now without an accident. He attributes this in part to the training he passes on to his drivers, and in part to the investment his department has made in safety equipment.

"I'm 58 years old, so I'm not an old guy. But I'm an old school driver. I was taught by a guy who said, 'if you can't see behind you, get out and look.' That's a pretty simple idea, right? The PRECO alert is what reminds my drivers that they need to stop, get out and look for themselves."