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### **Legislate safety for sanitation workers**

*Readers*

*The Journal News*

My cousin **John-Paul Rodrigues** died July 20, 2005, due to head injuries sustained as a result of falling off the back of an Ossining sanitation truck. He was 24 years old and working for Ossining DPW for only four months.

County Executive Andrew Spano mandated video cameras on Westchester County sanitation trucks, yet the mayor of Ossining, both former and current, just can't seem to grasp the importance of mandating safety helmets, video cameras, etc.

The responsibility does not lie solely with the DPW; employees also need to understand how dangerous their jobs are. I have witnessed sanitation workers in Tarrytown on two separate occasions riding two on the back platform. I have called Tarrytown DPW on both occasions, and the response to me was, "We'll talk to them." Talk is cheap! Make them understand that what happened to my cousin can happen to anyone. There are five or six work-related deaths a week nationwide involving sanitation workers. I know that Tarrytown, Cortlandt and Ossining have lost sanitation workers in accidents and, unfortunately, this will continue to happen unless things change.

The message needs to be put out there that sanitation workers' lives are just as valuable as that of a police officer and firefighter. They are mandated to wear protective gear; sanitation workers should be given the same advantage. This is not a suggestion; this should be the law. No one should have to suffer what my family has suffered; perhaps my cousin would be alive today if safety measures had been taken seriously.

Carla Silvestre  
Tarrytown