

Fleet Spotlight: DSNY Hamilton Avenue, Brooklyn, "The Taj Mahal of Transfer Stations"

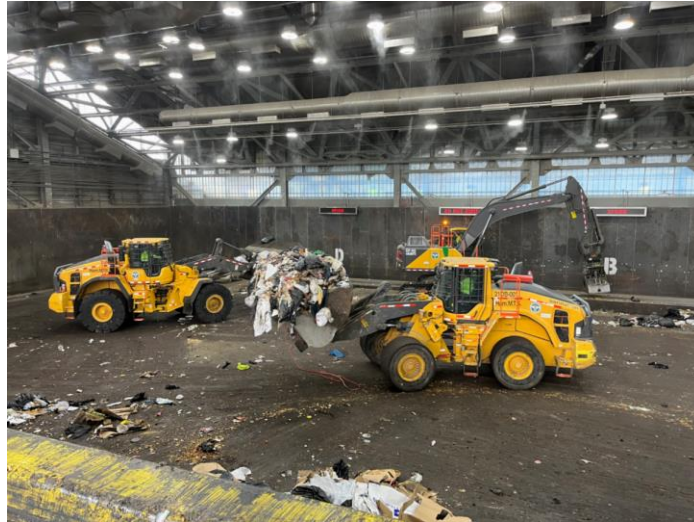
By Keith T. Kerman

We often discuss the city fleet as a whole. But the extent of the fleet and the categories of vehicles are incredibly vast. In fact, New York City's fleet consists of 190 different types of on and off-road vehicles operated across 54 agencies and offices. Citywide, DCAS supports hundreds of different service operations, many of which are specialized and distinct. Among the most unique of these operations are the New York City Department of Sanitation's (DSNY) Municipal Transfer Stations (MTSs), which handle and transport all of our city's residential and municipal waste. On October 31, DCAS toured the DSNY Hamilton Avenue MTS in Brooklyn.



Hamilton Avenue receives garbage six days a week from 10 different DSNY districts, five from Brooklyn North and five from Brooklyn South. In any given month, the site will process nearly 38,000 tons and up to 4,800 truckloads. Upon entering the site, all trucks are weighed twice through a semi-automated scale system to help reduce wait times and weighed on the way out. The difference of the laden and unladen weights equals the net tons of the load, which determines payment for the export vendors. On average, the City pays \$150 a ton to export waste.

All truckloads are scanned for medical waste with a radiation detection system. If a load tests positive, it will be placed to the side for specialized handling. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, DSNY Police, and NYC Health are all involved in this process. The facility has passive and active environmental engineering controls. For example, automated rapid roll-up doors help mitigate dust and odors and keep birds out. At all times, water mist is being sprayed on the site to keep dust in control.

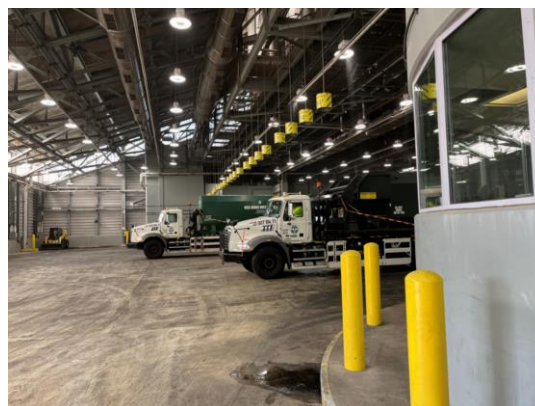


After being weighed, trucks drive on to the tipping floor, where they will dump their load to the processing floor. Large front-end loaders operated by sanitation workers will push the load of garbage into one of four floor slot openings, which drop into large containers. Then, workers use enormous excavators to tamper and “feather” the loads in the containers to ensure maximum weight per container. The loaders do not drive over or compress garbage. The operation on the floor is fast-moving and dynamic.

Hamilton Avenue is one of four MTS locations that operate in similar manners. There is also a waste transfer station at Fresh Kills in Staten Island. See here a full [map](#) of the DSNY refuse network. The MTS export system was put in place when Fresh Kills in Staten Island was closed as a landfill in late 2001. Fresh Kills is now being converted into a [New York City park](#).

The MTS is assigned support service personnel, including five auto mechanics, to keep the facility and equipment operating in optimal form. The mechanics, machinists, electricians, and laborers have received specialized training from Volvo and other vendors on this equipment.

Transporting this equipment is complicated and costly, so on-site repairs are critical. Among many unique aspects, the loaders use specialized solid rubber tires with cleats. Each tire costs \$9,000. In the last year, DSNY has worked with DCAS to transition all the equipment to renewable diesel. A renewable diesel tank is located at the site supplying the equipment. DSNY has also procured new excavators that are more efficiently designed with an ‘eco mode’ that reduces thousands of gallons of fuel use.



DSNY directly manages the interior operations of the facility. After the waste is loaded into containers, gantry cranes, operated by contractors, load the containers onto barges. The crane itself is an international achievement with design and components from Austria, Italy, Germany, and Poland.

One barge can handle 48 containers for approximately 960 tons. Transporting on a barge by vessel emits far less pollution than 48 vehicle tractor trailer loads. We were able to watch as a boatload headed out from this facility to a marine terminal owned by Waste Management in Elizabeth, New Jersey. The waste will then be loaded onto rail cars to be transported to landfills in Virginia. DSNY also trucks some waste to Essex, New Jersey, and other facilities that are waste-to-energy incinerator locations.

We asked about storm emergencies. The site is designed 25 feet above the water line to protect against flooding. There is an emergency generator to keep employees safe in a blackout. DSNY has a protocol in place to protect the site and equipment in the case of a major storm. Fires are highly rare at the site, although lithium batteries are a new area of potential concern.

“Welcome to the Taj Mahal of Transfer Stations,” states Assistant Chief Anthony Bianco, “an incredible feat of engineering from which New York City’s trash heads to its final destination, while keeping trucks off the roads and diesel fumes out of the air.”

Check out this [video](#) from DSNY of the MTS floor operation and this [video](#) outlining the larger waste removal operation. Thanks to the DSNY Solid Waste Management Team for their tour and dedication to this critical operation: Assistant Chief Anthony Bianco, Deputy Chief Omar Velasquez, and Supervisor of Mechanical Equipment Ralph Catuogno.



High blood pressure (hypertension) affects over 48% of American adults, but only 1 in 4 of them have it under control. High blood pressure can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney failure and other serious health problems. Take action by registering for WorkWell NYC's **8-week hypertension prevention and management program**, Let's Bring the Pressure Down.

[Register](#)

Vision Zero: Building a Safer City

This show highlights vendors who support the New York City's Clean Fleet and Vision Zero initiatives, and daily operations. Vendors will offer a wide array of products to improve vehicle safety. The show will also highlight vehicles and equipment with alternative fuels and emissions-reducing technologies, along with the latest in light and heavy-duty vehicles, trucks, horticultural equipment, tools, fleet services, and more!

36th Annual Equipment & Vehicle Show

Flushing Meadows Corona Park
(by the Unisphere), Queens, NY

**Thursday,
May 15, 2025
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**Rain Date:
Friday,
May 16, 2025**



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Mayor Eric Adams Delivers Fourth State of the City Address



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