

A Safety Guide for Tree Trimmers

Prevent tree-trimming related injuries

In the tree-trimming industry, the risk of injury from lacerations, “struck-by” incidents, slips and falls, strains, and electrocutions is present every day on the job. These incidents can lead to minor-to-severe injuries, days away from work, and in some cases, can be fatal. Many injuries are preventable by following the recommendations contained in this guide.

Safety involves everyone

Do your part to keep you and your coworker’s safe during tree-trimming activities:

- **Attend all training so you can recognize, control, and avoid hazards.**
- **Report unsafe actions, conditions, and equipment.**
- **Think about what you are doing and what others are doing around you.**



Preventing lacerations

Lacerations are one of the most common injuries to tree trimmers. Tree branches and limbs, inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE), working carelessly or taking shortcuts are primary causes for lacerations.

Protect yourself against lacerations by wearing PPE including a hard hat, gloves, goggles, chaps (cut – resistant material that covers the legs), and sturdy non-slip boots. Inspect your cutting tool or chainsaw to insure that it is sharp and functioning properly. A sharp tool is less likely to slip and cause an injury.

Preventing “struck-by” injuries

“Struck-by” injuries are among the leading causes of fatalities in tree trimming. Not only are tree trimmers at risk, so are your employees working on the ground. They can be struck by falling branches or tools.

- **Protect yourself from “struck-by” injuries by wearing the proper PPE.**
- **Survey your surroundings.**
- **Remain on guard for ricocheting or falling debris and chainsaw kickbacks.**

Preventing slips and falls

Slips and falls can happen for a variety of reasons. A slip can result if you wear improper footwear or if you walk carelessly on a wet, slick, or unstable surface. Falls happen when your body is unable to maintain its center of gravity such as overreaching while working at heights.

Improper, damaged or worn fall arrest equipment can also result in a fall. When working from heights, make sure you are secured and stable when climbing or cutting and never anchor or tie yourself to the limb you are cutting.

Preventing strains

Strains can occur when working in awkward positions or handling of heavy materials like tree stumps, branches, or equipment. Repetitive work and vibrating tools can also lead to cumulative trauma stress injuries. And, when your body is in good physical condition you are less likely to suffer from muscle strains.

Preventing electrocutions

Electrocution is a leading cause of injury to tree-trimmers who work around utility lines and use electrical tools and lifts. Workers can also receive electrical shocks from ungrounded equipment or when using electrical equipment in wet or damp conditions.

Use our [Tree Trimming Checklist](#) to help ensure your employees are staying safe on the job. See Cal/OSHA’s [Tree Work Safety Fact Sheet](#) for more safety information.