

# Tree Trimming Safety

## Safety Meeting Packet

### Protect Your Workforce



Whenever an employee is trimming trees of any shape or size, it is important that they take precautions to protect the safety of themselves, other employees, and other people. Falling branches, falling trees and power tools like chainsaws are all dangerous hazards that could seriously harm somebody. It is crucial that both employers and employees follow the proper safety procedures to complete jobs safely.

### Preliminary Cautions

Before starting to cut or climb a tree, it is important for the supervisor, foreman, or project lead to properly plan out the task from beginning to end. The individual should make sure the necessary equipment is available to complete the job safely. This includes making sure employees have any tools, personal protective equipment, ladders, etc. that they may need.

If employees are required to climb a tree or ladder, or use an aerial lift, it is important to point out overhead obstructions like power lines. Workers, ladders, and equipment should remain at least 10 feet away from all power lines, as it should be assumed that all lines are energized. If work needs completed closer than 10 feet, it is recommended that the supervising employee contact the power company to de-energize the line and/or install safety precautions for workers.



If falling objects are also a concern, a drop zone should be outlined by employees before beginning work. The drop zone should be clearly visible to employees and pedestrians, so that everyone can maintain a safe distance from the operation.

It is also important for managers to check on weather conditions if workers are needed to climb or be lifted. If high winds, rain, ice, or other bad weather conditions are predicted or are currently happening, employers should postpone all tree trimming until weather conditions improve.

### Personal Protective Equipment

The personal protective equipment used will vary depending on the scale of tree trimming operations. For minor tasks, those that require trimming a



bush or a few tree limbs, minimal equipment can be used. However, if workers are required to climb a ladder, use an aerial lift, or use a chain saw, much more equipment needs to be provided and worn to protect employees.

Goggles and other safety eyewear must be worn, especially when working with a chainsaw as they can throw splinters and other debris into the air and easily injure employees. If a worker is working with a chainsaw, earmuffs or earplugs are also important, because chainsaws make a droning noise which emits a frequency that can easily damage hearing. Hard hats should be worn by all types of tree trimming operations, because the chance of a falling branch is a constant risk. For a similar reason, steel-toed boots should also be worn as falling objects can easily hurt toes and feet. Durable gloves can help prevent blisters, improve grip, and keep hands warm during cold weather. Protective legwear, like cut-resistant pants, is important for chainsaw users to help prevent against major lacerations and other injuries.

### Chainsaw Safety

Chainsaws and other cutting tools are the most dangerous equipment used when trimming trees and branches. It is important for employees to know the safest ways to use these items.



Chainsaws should always be used with two hands firmly on the handles. It is recommended that the chainsaw is started on the ground, instead of while standing. This protects against any kickback that may occur. Kickback forces are the most dangerous chainsaw issue that operators may experience. Chainsaw operators should understand that cutting with the tip of the saw increases the chances of kickback, so workers should make sure they use the body or middle portion of the blade to cut.

Operators should never move more than a few feet with a chainsaw that is running. Operators should also be aware of sloped or uneven land when moving with a chainsaw, regardless of whether the chainsaw is running or not.

Lastly, it is important that employers properly maintain any chainsaw an employee may be working with. Maintenance includes fueling the chainsaw only when it is cool and checking the chain before use to making sure it is sharp and the chain is tensioned correctly.



## Additional Safety Information

Because tree trimming consists of a variety of different tasks and operations, there are additional safety protocols to consider for employees in these positions.

When a limb is being cut, all workers should be aware and expect falling debris. All saw users should have a co-worker or supervisor nearby to help offer guidance and awareness of any possible issues that may arise.

It is imperative that workers know the importance of electrical safety while trimming trees. Any branch or tool touching an active powerline will allow the circuit to travel from the powerline through the worker. This can cause electrocution and severe injuries. Electricity can jump off the line as well which is why it is crucial that employees maintain a safe distance from powerlines. Employers should also provide rubber-insulated or nonconductive equipment if employees are expected to work in an area where the threat of power lines is apparent. Electrical safety cannot be emphasized enough to employers and employees.

If ladder use is anticipated, employees should complete ladder safety training. Training should inform employees that ladders should be placed on solid ground and should be tied into the tree if possible. There should always be a worker on the bottom of the ladder to add extra support and guidance for the worker on the ladder.

Wood chippers may also be used as a part of tree trimming operations. Wood chippers pose additional hazards when used by untrained workers. Employers should never let employees insert body parts into the chipper. Instead, employees should be trained to use a push stick to keep their limbs away from the machine. The best way to ensure these rules are followed is to only allow trained employees operate equipment like a wood chipper. All employees working around wood chippers should be wearing the proper protective equipment including hearing, eye, and head protection.

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For additional information, please consult the following:

- OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.23 - Ladders.
  - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910 Subpart I - Personal Protective Equipment
  - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910 Subpart S - Electrical
  - OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910.266(e) - Hand and Portable Powered Tools
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# Tree Trimming Safety

## Safety Meeting Attendance Acknowledgement

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department / Division \_\_\_\_\_  
 Meeting Date & Time \_\_\_\_\_  AM  PM  
 Meeting Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name & Title of Individual Conducting Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

### Key Meeting Discussion Points / Important Reminders:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Internal Procedures Reviewed:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**By signing this document, you confirm your attendance at the meeting and acknowledge the issues addressed above!**

Employees in Attendance		
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____
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(Print): _____	(Print): _____	(Print): _____
(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____	(Sign): _____

Employees Not Present: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions/Recommendations to Improve Workplace Safety and Health: \_\_\_\_\_

Actions Taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Disclaimer:**

The information provided above was assembled using multiple resources. However, these materials do not contain ALL the information available regarding the required safety standards under local, provincial, state, or federal law for your industry.

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