

Loss Control Insights

Tree Trimming Safety Tips

How many times have you read a headline similar to “Man Loses Leg in Tree Trimming Accident” or even worse an accident results in a fatality? I recently lost a neighbor that died as a consequence of an accident that left him paralyzed; a limb he was cutting down gave way, leaving him a quadriplegic for over 10 years.

As you know trees require regular pruning, trimming and maintenance. When a tree dies or becomes diseased, it must be cut down in order to avoid injuries and/or damage to nearby structures.



**“What’s the problem? I’m
nowhere near those power lines!”**

Identify any hazards in the work area, including nearby power lines, and whenever possible, minimize or eliminate exposure to these hazards. If power lines are in or near the worksite, contact the local utility company. The general rule of thumb is any trimming or clearing work within ten feet of a power line must be completed by trained and experienced line-clearance tree trimmers. Always assume all power lines are energized.

Ensure workers operating chainsaws and other equipment are trained and that all equipment is properly maintained and inspected before use, provide the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), and:

- Clear and identify a path for workers to retreat to a safe location when felling trees and trimming branches
- Do not attempt to remove or trim trees in high winds or other dangerous weather
- Address any leaning or lodged trees
- Inspect broken trees that may be under pressure and use a machine to remove the trees or a chainsaw to make small cuts to release the pressure
- Identify the proper amount of hinge wood needed to safely direct a tree’s fall
- Determine a tree’s proper felling direction
- Stay alert and never turn your back on a falling tree
- Reduce risk by using a machine to push or pull down a tree that is wedged against another tree
- Use caution when moving ladders and other equipment near downed trees and power lines
- Use fall protection for workers in lifts, climbing trees, and trimming high branches, and chainsaw chaps for workers operating chainsaws
- Train workers to assess the strength and stability of branches before climbing onto them and avoid

climbing trees while holding tools

- Protect hands and provide an improved grip for workers handling tools and equipment with work gloves
- Workers using chainsaws and other noisy equipment should be equipped with hearing protection
- Ensure workers are wearing hard hats to protect against falling and flying debris
- As a tree falls, branches, bark, wood, and dirt may be projected into the air. Help protect workers by providing eye protection and face protection