

Safety

SOLUTIONS



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Tree Care Work Presents Fatal Hazards

More and more landscape companies and other PLANET members are getting involved in professional tree care work. Yet even longtime, experienced tree care workers face serious hazards which can quickly lead to death.

Among these hazards are: being struck by branches or falling trees; coming into either direct or indirect contact with live power lines; falling from trees; and being pulled into chippers. Some recent examples:

- *A 40 year old tree trimmer was topping a tree that was too close to high voltage power lines. The tree fell across the power lines and struck the worker's bucket as it fell to the ground. His forearm was amputated by the power line.*
- *A 45 year old worker was trimming a tree in a residential neighborhood but was not using fall protection. He fell 15 feet from the tree landing to the concrete ground and died.*

- *The owner of a tree care firm was in the bucket of an aerial lift when a branch fell, hit the boom, and broke a hydraulic hose. The man tried to slide down the boom but lost his grip, fell 45 feet, and died.*
- *A worker was putting limbs into a commercial wood chipper when the machine suddenly stopped. The worker's entire body had been sucked into the chipper.*
- *A 20 year old worker was using his foot to push branches into a chipper. He died after his shoe got caught and his leg was pulled into the chipper.*

In California, an incident in which a tree trimmer working alone was pulled into a chipper and died resulted in the state's FACE program producing a preventive one-page fact sheet: www.dhs.ca.gov/ohb/ohsep/face/woodchipper.pdf

(For more safety information, see TCIA's Web site: www.tcia.org)

Leading by Example

The Care of Trees: How to Run a Good Safety Meeting

How do you run an effective safety meeting that keeps up the interest of your workers and makes employees accountable for safety at all levels?

A recent visit to The Care of Trees in Wheeling, Illinois included attending a 6:30 a.m. Wheeling District Safety Meeting. Here is what was discussed at this particular meeting, in the hope that it will also help you:

- **Incidents, including “near misses,” from the past week.** The person involved was asked to describe it and to talk about how such incidents could be *prevented* in the future. The leader of the meeting also checked to make sure the person involved had filled out a written incident report.
- **Measuring successful safety behaviors.** This is important, rather than just looking at measures taken after an incident occurs. One example of this was to count how many times a worker tapped a tree that week before climbing it (to ensure that it wasn't hollow).
- **How comfortable are less experienced workers approaching a more experienced employee if the experienced one is seen doing something unsafe.** This is often difficult for less experienced workers to do. It was suggested that the more experienced workers “invite” dialogue.

“Let the new workers know they have as big a stake in safety as the more experienced workers – that they need to question, too,” it was suggested.

Another topic at the meeting was the dangers of backing up – backing up a vehicle over a child or into a light pole. *“If you can't get into a client's property safely, don't do it,”* employees were told.

The meeting ended with warm-up “stretching” exercises before workers left for their job sites.

Note: There are many different topics you can cover at a safety meeting. What's important is to regularly hold these meetings and to involve everyone from top management on down.

PLANET-OSHA Alliance Web Pages Now Available

OSHA recently posted new *Landscape and Horticultural Services Safety and Health Topics* Web pages on its Web site:

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/landscaping/index.html>

The product of many months of cooperative work between OSHA and PLANET, these Web pages include much information aimed at reducing injuries, illnesses and deaths within our industry. Available to the entire industry, this information includes: industry-specific data on injuries and fatalities; common hazards and solutions; applicable OSHA standards; most often cited OSHA standards in our industry; and resources to assist you in building an effective safety program.

OR Landscape Contractors Promote STARS Program

The Oregon Landscape Contractors Association is adopting PLANET's STARS Safe Company Program as a proactive safety program and is encouraging all of its more than 300 company members to join.

Safety Committee Chairman Jeff Graham says the state association will use PLANET, its Safety/Insurance Committee, and the STARS program as a model for its own increased safety efforts.

"We will have our first annual Safety Recognition Awards this year, and STARS membership will be part of the criteria used in determining the award recipients," Graham says.

"Our Safety Committee will pool the data received from these submissions to begin developing benchmarks for the Oregon landscape industry."

Graham said the association's Safety Committee will actively promote the STARS program and help its members recognize the benefits of STARS membership.

"We will do this using all of our resources, including the Safety Recognition Awards, the 2005 Oregon Landscape Expo, all committee communications, and monthly newsletters," he says.

Note: If your company has a strong commitment to safety and you have not yet joined PLANET's free STARS program, contact Ilene Manster at (800) 395-2522 or ilenemanster@landcarenetwork.org for more information.

New Bilingual Slips and Trips Training Available

PLANET has developed a new bilingual (English/Spanish) *Safety Tips Sheet on Slip and Trip Injuries* as a product of the PLANET-OSHA Alliance.

This brief fact sheet can be used to train workers in the prevention of slip and trip injuries – one of the four major hazards identified in our PLANET-OSHA Alliance.

This training is being made available to the entire industry on PLANET's Web site. Future Safety Tips Sheets will cover injuries resulting from manual material handling; safe driving to prevent motor vehicle crashes; and prevention of amputations.

To access the first new Tips Sheet in English or Spanish, click on: www.alca.org/safety

Landscape Firm Rated a Top Place to Work in Bay Area

Gachina Landscape Management, a PLANET member and STARS Safe Company member, was recently named one of the top 100 places to work in the San Francisco Bay area in an employee survey sponsored by the *Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal* and the *San Francisco and East Bay Business Times*. Gachina ranked No. 33 in the category covering businesses with 101 to 300 employees.

Reminder: If you have a question about safety, PLANET's Safety Hotline can be reached at (608) 848-3758 or barbmulhern@landcarenetwork.org

PLANET-OSHA Alliance receives national promotion

Note: The following article, being reprinted with permission, ran on the front page of the March 2005 issue of OSHA's Alliance Quarterly Review, a publication that is E-mailed to the 300-plus participating OSHA Alliances throughout the country.

HERNDON, VA – Ongoing communication, joint development of new ideas, and sharing input from professionals in the industry are keys to the success of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) one-year-old Alliance with the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET).

PLANET, formerly the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (which merged with the Professional Lawn Care Association of America in January), is an organization that represents an industry named by OSHA as one of the top hazardous industries in the United States. Yet through close collaboration, the OSHA-PLANET Alliance is providing high quality education and training aimed at reducing serious injuries and deaths in landscaping and related horticultural services.

David Snodgrass, CLP and chair of PLANET's Safety/Insurance Committee, said the Alliance addresses concerns such as driving safety issues and slips and trips when working on uneven terrain. "I think the Alliance represents a whole new dimension to our safety information and safety training that we've never had before. Between

OSHA, PLANET, and the industry, we're going to add a focus on our industry so we get specific statistics that show us what's causing the accidents and where the injuries are occurring."

PLANET's Alliance agreement addresses four major hazards – strains caused by manual material handling; amputations; motor vehicle crashes; and slip and trip injuries. In addition, a growing number of workers in the landscaping industry are Spanish-speaking, so a key goal of the Alliance is to also provide bilingual training.

In late 2004, the Alliance began discussions on how it can best provide bilingual motor vehicle safety training to crew leaders/supervisors and workers during the second year of the Alliance.

Dan Foley, CLP and president of the PLANET Board, said he is enthusiastic about the cooperative effort.

"PLANET has made a very strong commitment to safety," he said. "Part of that commitment includes the development of new Web-based training 'fact sheets' for the industry on the specific hazards identified in our Alliance agreement. It also includes continued efforts to launch a bilingual defensive driving course."

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