

## Safety Meeting – July 27, 2009

There are approximately **58 fatalities per year in the tree service industry** according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The vast majority (**75%**) of those fatalities are **falls, being struck by falling objects, and electrocutions**, which are types of accidents most closely associated with tree trimming and removal operations. Falls and being struck by falling objects, account for about one-third (**32 percent**) and one-quarter (26 percent) of the deaths, respectively. Contact with electric current resulted in **17.6 percent** of the fatalities.

According to the OSHA Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), **39 employees were killed in chipper accidents** from 1996-2005. Of those fatalities, the vast majority (78 percent) resulted from being caught in the chipper, and most of the remainder resulted from "struck-by" accidents.

The 2 topics today are **(1) Brush Removal & Chipping**, and **(2) Avoiding "Struck-by" Injuries**

### **Brush Removal & Chipping:**

The following are recommended safe chipper work practices to reduce "caught-in" and "struck-by" hazards:

- Designate one or more employees as a safety watch to be stationed near emergency shut-off devices while other employees feed material into the chipper.
- Stand to the side of the infeed chute when feeding material into the chipper. This reduces the "caught-in" hazard and allows quick access to emergency stop devices.
- Shut down the chipper and remove the ignition key when it is unattended.
- DO NOT leave chipper feed wheels on while not attended (i.e. going to pick up more brush in back yard)
- Keep hands and feet out of the hopper at all times
- Keep hands and feet out of the immediate infeed chute area while the chipper is running.
- Push material into feed rollers with a wooden tool or a long branch.
- Feed branches into the chipper butt-end first.
- Place shorter branches on top of longer branches being fed into the chipper.
- Place small debris into trash cans instead of feeding it into the chipper.
- Never stand, sit or climb onto any part of the chipper while it is running.
- Before starting a chipper, ensure that the chipper's disc hood is completely closed and latched, and that there are no foreign objects in the infeed area.
- Ensure that the discharge chute is positioned to prevent chips from hitting employees.
- Do not stand in front of the feed table when the chipper is running.
- Check material to be fed to ensure that it is free of metal and other foreign objects.
- Use proper locking pins to immobilize the disc cutting wheel when attempting to clear a clogged chipper chute or changing chipper blades.

### *Personal protective equipment and clothing –*

- Use appropriate hand protection
- Use appropriate eye and face protection
- Wear a protective helmet (i.e. hard hat)

The following are industry and ANSI recommended clothing and apparel to prevent entanglement hazards:

- Wear gloves with no cuffs (non-gauntlet) (ANSI Z133.1-2006-3.4 4, 8.6.3).
- Wear close-fitting and tucked-in clothing with no stray straps or strings. Jewelry should not be worn while operating chippers (ANSI Z133.1-2006-8.6.3).

### **Avoiding "Struck-by" Injuries:**

The following are recommended safe work practices to reduce "struck-by" hazards:

- Always Use Personal Protective Equipment – HARD HAT
- Know the **drop zone** (Any object from above can be a hazard)
- Communicate effectively with tree climber & grounds men
- Tree climbers always be aware of who is below, especially before ANY cut or drop is performed
- Tree climbers always be careful of hangers that could potentially fall
- Tree climbers always use verbal warnings when necessary
- Grounds men always be aware of what tree climber is doing, and KNOW & be conscience of the drop zone
- Grounds men always assume an object could fall from above anytime
- Always be aware and conscience of your surroundings and make SAFETY #1 priority