

# Hazard Alert

## Tree Work Can Be Fatal

STATE OF NEW  
HAMPSHIRE

DIVISION OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH  
AND HUMAN  
SERVICES

OCCUPATIONAL  
HEALTH  
SURVEILLANCE  
PROGRAM

### Why are work- ers dying?

Investigations by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) suggest that many tree trimmers and their employers are not complying with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards and may be unaware of the risks posed by inadequate or improper safety procedures and equipment.

### Four Workers Die in Tree Cutting Incidents in New Hampshire in 2012

*On April 3, 2012, a 59-year-old independent contractor died while cutting down a tree. The victim was removing limbs with a chain saw. While taking down one of the limbs, the tree shifted and a large segment of the tree fell, pulling the man's chest harness and pinning him against the tree. The force of the branch on the harness caused the fatal injury.*

*On June 13, 2012, a 52-year-old tree service employee died following electrocution. The victim was operating a wood chipper situated within a foot from a tree crane when the crane's lifting cable touched a live wire, causing electricity to travel through the crane and the chipper and into the victim.*

*On December 24, 2012, a 32-year-old tree service employee died as a result of massive injuries sustained following a tree accident. The victim was working to remove a storm-damaged tree when a large limb gave way, causing him to fall 15 feet. The limb subsequently fell on top of the victim.*

*On April 28, 2012, a 20-year-old independent contractor died when the tree he was cutting fell onto him. The victim was wearing proper safety equipment; however, shifting wind conditions may have played a role.*

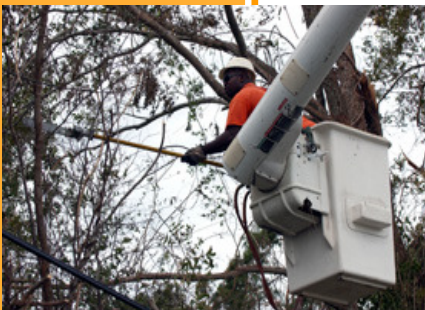


Photo courtesy of OSHA. This picture shows actual disaster site work conditions and may not illustrate proper safety and health procedures.

**Falls**  
**Electrocutions**  
**Struck by Falling Object**

**For more information on how to prevent these deaths, see back page.**

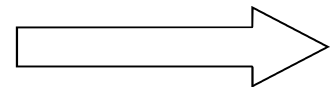




Photo courtesy of FEMA.  
This picture shows actual disaster site work conditions and may not illustrate proper safety and health procedures.

## Recommended Safe Practices

### Falls

- Use appropriate fall prevention methods when working in trees.
- Position climbing lines so the worker cannot free-fall to a lower level.
- Check the condition of tree branches before climbing on them.
- Inspect the condition of climbing lines and other equipment prior to each use.

### Electrocutions

- The employer and worker should check the tree for safety hazards, including power lines.
- Workers and equipment must be at least 10 feet from energized power lines unless the worker is a qualified line clearance arborist and uses appropriate equipment.
- The employer should notify the utility company if work must be done within 10 feet of an energized power line.

### Struck by Falling Object

- Clearly mark the work zone boundaries (for example, with cones or safety tape).
- Establish clear methods of communication between workers at the job site.
- The worker in the tree (or aerial lift) must give clear warnings to the ground crew.
- The ground crew must acknowledge that the warning was received.

### Resources

#### New Hampshire Arborists Association

<http://www.nharborists.org/>

#### The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)

<http://www.isa-arbor.com/>

*A certified tree expert or arborist can be consulted to assess the tree and its environment.*

#### Tree Care Industry Association

<http://tcia.org/>

#### U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) New Hampshire Office

Concord, NH 03301

603-225-1629

## Standards of Practice

### American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

ANSI Z133.1-2000. Standard for Tree Care Operation - Pruning, Trimming, Repairing, Maintaining, and Removing Trees, and Cutting Brush - Safety Requirements ([www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org))

### Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards:

29 CFR 1910.135, Head Protection

29 CFR 1910.137, Electrical Protective Equipment

29 CFR 1910.268, Telecommunications

29 CFR 1910.269, Electric Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution

29 CFR 1910.333, Selection and Use of Work Practices

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

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