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Tree Trimming General Safety Message

Tree trimming can be a very dangerous job. According to a Rutgers study, tree care injuries account for about 80 worker deaths and 23,000 chainsaw injuries across the United States each year. The majority of these injuries result from inadequate training and poorly maintained equipment.

Tree Trimming Dangers:

• Falling from trees or elevated work surfaces. This risk is the most obvious danger, which often results in serious injury and death.
• Struck-by branches or trunks. Falling trees or limbs create a risk of struck-by incidents.
• Electrocution. Many trees are near overhead powerlines that present electrical hazards during tree trimming tasks.
• Tool injuries. Chainsaw operation can lead to lacerations, burns, or flying debris injuries.

Other hazards include:

• Ergonomic-back strains, shoulder and arm pain resulting from awkward postures, and vibration from tools.
• Heat illnesses from working in direct sun during hot weather days.
• Hearing loss from inadequate or not using hearing protection.
• Biological hazards from animals and insects.

Personal Protective Equipment

As a tree worker-or arborist-certain personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed to protect you while tree trimming.

• Hard hats must be worn to protect you from falling limbs and other objects.
• Eye and face protection, such as safety glasses, goggles, or even a face shield to protect your eyes and face.
• Hearing protection, such as earmuffs or earplugs to reduce your exposure to loud noise.
• Heavy-duty gloves to protect you from cuts and punctures,
• Reflective clothing-a high-visibility safety vest.
• Leg protection-cut-resistant pants or protective chaps **MUST BE WORN WHEN CUTTING ON THE GROUND.**
• Fall protection, which could include safety harnesses, climbing belts, ropes, and lanyards.

Discussion points:

1, What are other hazards to consider when trimming trees?
2. What are other safety practices that we can follow?