Electrical Safety – Landscaping Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

The nature of landscaping work, often conducted outdoors in various weather conditions, adds to the complexity and risk. Understanding the dangers and practicing proper electrical safety is essential to prevent injuries and fatalities.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Electrical hazards in landscaping range from the use of electric tools to working near power lines.

These hazards include:

- **High Risk of Injury:** In the landscaping industry, the combination of water, metal tools, and electricity creates an environment where accidents can easily happen if proper precautions are not taken.
- **Environmental Challenges:** Landscaping often involves working in wet conditions, which significantly increases the risk of electrical shocks.

Specific Risks

1. **Contact with Overhead Power Lines**
    - **Ladders and Equipment:** Ladders, pruning poles, and other long tools can accidentally come into contact with overhead power lines, leading to electrocution.
    - **Tree Trimming:** Workers trimming trees near power lines are at significant risk of electrical shock if branches or tools touch live wires.
1. **Underground Utilities**
    - **Digging and Trenching:** Striking underground electrical cables during digging or trenching activities can result in severe shocks or explosions.
    - **Lack of Utility Marking:** Failing to properly identify and mark the

location of underground utilities increases the risk of accidental contact.

1. **Use of Electric-Powered Tools**
    - **Wet Conditions:** Operating electric tools in wet or damp conditions can lead to electrical shocks if the equipment is not properly insulated or grounded.

1. **Improper Grounding**
    - **Tool Grounding:** Tools that are not properly grounded can cause electrical shocks. Double-insulated tools can reduce this risk.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Before The Work:

1. **Inspect the Worksite**
    - **Identify Power Lines:** Always be aware of the location of overhead power lines and keep a safe distance from them.
    - **Locate Underground Utilities:** Before digging, contact local utility services to mark the location of underground utilities.

1. **Inspect Tools and Equipment:**
    - **Check for Damage:** Inspect all electric-powered tools and extension cords for damage before use.
    - **Ensure Proper Grounding:** Verify that tools are properly grounded or double-insulated.

During The Work:

1. **Safe Tool Usage:**
    - **Dry Conditions:** Avoid using electric-powered tools in wet or damp conditions. If the work area is wet, take extra precautions such as using ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).

1. **Work Around Power Lines**
    - **Maintain Safe Distances:** Keep yourself, your tools, and any equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines. This distance may need to be increased depending on the voltage.
    - **Tree Trimming Precautions:** When trimming trees near power lines, use non-conductive tools and work with a partner who can help guide you and ensure your safety.

1. **Digging and Excavation**
    - **Use Hand Tools Near Marked Lines:** When working near marked underground utilities, use hand tools to carefully expose the lines before using heavier equipment.
    - **Follow Utility Marks:** Pay close attention to utility markings and never assume the depth of buried lines. Utilities can be buried at varying depths, and caution is essential.

Emergency Preparedness

1. **Responding to Electrical Incidents**
    - **Know What to Do:** If a coworker is electrocuted, do not touch them directly if they are still in contact with the electrical source.
    - **First Aid Training:** Ensure that all workers are trained in basic first aid, including CPR, to provide immediate assistance in the event of an electrical shock.

1. **Power Shutoff:**
    - **Identify Shutoff Points:** Know the location of circuit breakers or other power shutoff points on the job site. In an emergency, quickly shutting off the power can prevent further injury.

FINAL WORD

By following safety protocols, staying vigilant, and ensuring proper training and equipment maintenance, you can protect yourself and your coworkers from these hazards.