Pruning Safety Stats and Facts



FACTS

Common tree maintenance hazards for workers.

1. **Being Struck.** Falling tree branches and other debris are the most common source of injury for tree trimmers.
2. **Falls. Working on tall trees means working at great heights.** Although harnesses and other safety equipment should be used, accidents still happen.
3. **Electrocution.** Trees are often situated near overhead power lines. Tree trimmers may encounter these wires while working.
4. **Impact Injuries.** Tree trimmers use heavy equipment to access their work. A worker could become stuck against a branch or pinned against a building.
5. **Lacerations and Amputations.** Sharp saws and heavy-duty chippers come with obvious dangers for those who mishandle them. Workers must use caution with sharp and powerful tools, such as chainsaws and chippers.
6. **Animal or Insect Attacks.** Many creatures make their homes in trees, including squirrels, raccoons, and chipmunks. Trees can also provide a space for hornets' nests, beehives, and ant colonies.
7. **Heat-Related Injuries.** On sweltering summer days, or any day when temperatures rise and the sun beats down, workers should drink plenty of water and make time for breaks.
8. **Ergonomic Issues.** Jobs that involve employees working with their hands can present ergonomic issues. Tree trimmers work with their entire bodies by climbing, reaching, pulling, lifting, and carrying objects.
9. **Hearing Loss.** Chainsaws and chippers are loud. Workers should be provided with adequate hearing protection while using such loud equipment.
10. **Scrapes, Splinters, and Skin Reactions.** Tree trimmers may encounter tree bark or jagged wood pieces that cause injuries. Scrapes and splinters they should be treated before they become infected.

STATS

- An estimated 648,100 individuals (95% confidence interval: 535,500-760,700) were treated in US hospital emergency departments for trimming- and pruning-related injuries during the 18-year study period.
- Lacerations and puncture injuries occurred most often (71.0%), and injuries

to the arms and hands accounted for 67.8% of cases. A majority (56.8%) of injuries involved the use of a power tool. The most common project at the time of injury was hedge/shrub trimming (66.5%), followed by grass/lawn trimming (24.3%) and tree trimming (9.1%). Patients required hospitalization in 2.1% of cases.

- NIOSH identified 181 work-related deaths among workers involved in tree trimming and cutting. These fatalities represent the minimum number of workers who actually died. The two leading causes of death were electrocution (38%) and falling (29%).
- Each year, more than 23,000 tree maintenance professionals are treated for chainsaw accidents, approximately 80 of which are fatal.