

Tree Trimming & Removal

Tree trimming or removal, whether it is done as routine maintenance or after a storm, has resulted in serious injuries and fatalities to public works employees. Hazards are many: treework must often be performed near powerlines, heavy tree limbs and trunks may fall unpredictably, and the power equipment itself poses dangers.

Guide for Discussion

Assume that all power lines are energized!

- Contact the utility company to discuss de-energizing and grounding or shielding of power lines.
- All tree trimming or removal work within ten feet of a power line must be done by trained and experienced line-clearance tree trimmers. A second tree trimmer is required within normal voice communication range.
- Line-clearance tree trimmers must be aware of and maintain the proper minimum approach distances when working around energized power lines.
- Use extreme caution when moving ladders and equipment around downed trees and power lines.

Do not trim trees in dangerous weather conditions.

- Perform a hazard assessment of the work area before starting work.
- Eliminate or minimize exposure to hazards by the tree and in the surrounding area.
- Operators of chain saws and other equipment should be trained and the equipment properly maintained.
- Use Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, hard hats, hearing protection, etc., recommended in the equipment manufacturer's operating manual.
- Determine the tree's felling direction. Address forward lean, back lean, and/or side lean issues, and for vines that may tether the tree with other trees or objects.
- Determine the proper amount of hinge wood to safely guide the tree's fall. Provide a retreat path to a safe location.
- Inspect tree limbs for strength and stability before climbing. Tree trimmers working aloft must use appropriate fall protection.
- Do not climb with tools in your hands.
- If broken trees are under tension, determine the direction of the pressure and make small cuts to release it.
- Use extreme care when felling a tree that has not fallen completely to the ground and is lodged against another tree.
- Never turn your back on a falling tree.
- Be alert and avoid objects thrown back by a tree as it falls.

Additional Discussion Notes:

Remember

Attendees _____

Questions? Ask your Supervisor or CIRMA Risk Management Consultant.