Electrical Safety – Landscaping Stats and Facts

FACTS

Primary hazards associated with electrical safety in landscaping

1. **Contact with Overhead Power Lines:** Landscaping work often involves using tall equipment like ladders, pole saws, and pruning tools, which can inadvertently come into contact with overhead power lines.
2. **Improper Use of Electrical Tools:** Hedge trimmers, chainsaws, and mowers, are electrically powered. Improper use, such as using damaged cords or operating tools in wet conditions, can result in electrical shocks or fires.
3. **Lack of Grounding:** Failure to properly ground electrical equipment or tools can cause electrical shocks in wet or damp environments common in landscaping.
4. **Inadequate Training:** Workers who are not adequately trained in electrical safety may not recognize hazards or understand the proper protocols for working near electrical sources.
5. **Electrical Fires:** Poor maintenance of electrical equipment, such as frayed cords or faulty connections, can lead to electrical fires, which are particularly hazardous in outdoor environments.
6. **Use of Extension Cords:** The improper use of extension cords, such as overloading them or using them inappropriately (e.g., in wet conditions), can lead to overheating, shocks, or fires.
7. **Arc Flash:** While less common, an arc flash can occur if there is a short circuit or fault in the electrical system. This can cause a sudden release of energy, leading to severe burns or even explosions.

STATS

- According to (BLS), there were approximately 166 electrical fatalities across all industries in the U.S. in 2019. Outdoor work environments, including landscaping, are recognized as high-risk areas due to exposure to power lines and the use of electrically powered tools.
- The (ESFI) reports that there are over 2,000 non-fatal electrical injuries each year in the U.S. across all industries.
- According to (OSHA), approximately 30% of electrical fatalities occur from direct contact with overhead power lines, a common risk in landscaping when working on tree trimming or using tall equipment.
- The landscaping industry contributes to the statistics where electrocution remains one of the top four causes of fatalities, known as the “Fatal Four,” which accounted for more than half of the construction worker deaths in 2018.
- In the USA, there are approximately 400 electrocutions each year, with a significant portion related to landscaping, gardening, and farming equipment, which accounts for 67% of electrocutions annually.
- Electrical hazards in the workplace lead to about 4,000 injuries each year in the USA.
- Between 2015 and 2019, landscaping accounted for 7% of occupational electrical-related fatalities in Ontario.
- Landscaping activities, such as lawn cutting and tree trimming, were associated with 20% of non-occupational electrical-related fatalities in Ontario from 2010 to 2019.