

Tree Trimming Meeting Kit

INTRODUCTION

Before tree trimming work begins, a Qualified Tree Worker (QTW) assesses any tree scheduled for trimming or other work. No one may climb a tree unless the QTW has determined the tree is safe.

Each day, before work begins, look for rips, frays, tears, broken buckles or clips, worn or damaged spurs and gaffs.

An inspection will reveal damage to fall protection equipment. Replacement gear should be on hand just in case something breaks.

It must be strong enough to support the weight of the worker and the equipment.

WHAT WORKERS NEED TO DO AND KNOW WHEN TREE TRIMMING

The Set-Up:

- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment. Some jurisdictions may have regulations about the type of training required for tree cutting and trimming.
- If an aerial bucket truck or other boomed vehicle is used, the operators must be trained in the safe operation of these vehicles.
- Before trimming a tree, inspect the area to identify possible hazards (e.g., presence of power lines, broken or cracked limbs after a severe storm) and take appropriate actions to prevent injuries or incidents.
- Assume any power lines are energized or “live”. Avoid any direct or indirect contact with the power line until the utility or hydro company has verified that the line has been de-energized.
- Mark off area around the tree and prevent bystander access.

Always work with another person on the ground.

- Learn to recognize trees weakened by disease and types of trees prone to cracking.
- Inspect tree limbs for strength before climbing. Check for cavities in the tree, rotten or dead branches, splits and cracks in the trunk or where branches are attached, broken branches hanging in the tree, etc.
- Inspect the fall protection equipment and lines before each time they are used. Tag and remove any damaged or defective equipment from service until it can be repaired or replaced and disposed of properly, according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- If a ladder is used, tie it off on a secure branch.

Operation:

- Break small dead branches off by hand as you climb. Remove larger branches with proper tools.
- Place hands and feet on separate limbs and move only one hand or foot at a time.
- Raise or lower tools by attaching hand lines to the end of tools. Tools attached at the centre might catch on branches. Smaller tools may be raised and lowered in a bucket attached to a hand line.
- Use non-conductive tools and personal protective equipment if working near electrical power lines.
- Be sure that you can see the cut you are making so you do not cut hand lines, safety ropes, etc. unintentionally.
- Attach a fibre or leather guard on saws that are held by a ring on worker's belt.

What Should You Avoid When Trimming Trees?

- Do not use dead branches for support.
- Do not climb trees during wet or icy weather or under high wind conditions.
- Do not leave partially sawn limbs on trees.
- Do not carry saws, pruners and other tools while climbing.
- Do not use axes or hatchets.

Assess the Condition and Stability of the Tree Visually. This Includes:

- Whether the tree is leaning heavily in one direction
- If there is evidence of bark inclusion
- If there are dead branches
- Any signs of decay in the tree structure
- Any signs of fungal fruiting bodies
- Any hollows
- If there are branches intruding from nearby trees
- The presence of any concealed nests or insect colonies
- Whether the tree type is susceptible to branch failure when under load
- The stability of the tree root plate by pushing or pulling the tree and observing the ground movement

Accessing the Tree

- If a tree is not to be felled from the ground, conduct a site-specific risk assessment to help you decide the safest way of accessing the tree which may include the use of an EWP, a crane or climbing
- Secure a suitable rope climbing system by using correct knots at a location on the tree which can withstand the forces of a fall
- If a crane is to be used to place a person in the tree it must be done in accordance with the plant used in connection with tree lopping – crane access method position paper
- Climbing spikes can damage tree tissues which can result in infection and decay as well as creating future hazards

What Should You Avoid When Working Near Power Lines?

- Do not approach fall power lines.
- Do not grasp the pruner closer than four feet from the metal head.

What Should You Know About Personal Protective Equipment?

- Use approved safety belts, lifelines, and leather gauntlet gloves.

- Wear head and eye protection and footwear protection with slip-resistant soles.
- Choose close-fitting, long-sleeved clothing.

FINAL WORD

Tree work is dangerous, While the risk of falling is always present, pre-work inspections, equipment inspections, and use of proper protective gear help minimize the risk of an accident.