

Working Safely with Ornamental Trees: Protecting Yourself, Your Team, and Your Trees

Fatality File

Two Workers Injured When One Is Caught by Tree Chipper

At approximately 2:30 p.m. on June 23, 2012, Employee #1, Employee #2, and a coworker were employed as laborers by a firm that worked on ornamental trees and shrubs. They were working in the City of Los Angeles, CA. They were removing a tree, when a rope attached to Employee #1 went into a tree chipper. Another worker, who was their acting foreman, quickly shut off the chipper. The narrative was not clear if the foreman was the coworker mentioned in the first sentence. The City of Los Angeles Fire Department was called.

Employee #1, Employee #2, and the coworker who witnessed the incident were taken to the emergency room of Saint John's Hospital in Santa Monica, CA. Employee #1 sustained fractured ribs, a punctured lung, and a fractured left arm, thumb, and wrist. He was hospitalized for 2 days. Employee #2 sustained abdominal injuries, and he was hospitalized for over a week. Cal/OSHA was notified by the fire department, and it went to the scene on July 9, 2012.

Since work was no longer underway, the inspector proceeded to the employer's office in Reseda, initiating an investigation after conducting an opening conference with management and obtaining permission to inspect. General citations issued to the employer include: 3203(a)(4) Failure to recognize hazard. 3395(f)(3) Inadequate HIPPS.

Source: [Osha.gov/](https://www.osha.gov/)