

Workplace health and safety hazard identification checklist: Tree trimming/arboreal industry

Use the checklist below to identify potential health and safety problems in your workplace. If you answer 'no' to any of the questions you may need to make changes. Further information can be obtained from the practical guidance sheets for your industry.

Manual tasks

Look at the tasks performed in your workplace and for each task ask yourself the following questions:

Are the forces required to perform the task within the physical capacity of the worker?	Yes No	Are workers able to perform the task in an upright, forward facing position? (i.e. not bent over or twisting/turning their back)	Yes No
If the task is performed for prolonged periods, can it be performed at a steady, easy pace?	Yes No	Are work practices such as cutting logs into small, easier to handle pieces utilised?	Yes No
Are workers able to vary their posture throughout the task? (i.e. don't have to stand, sit, kneel or squat for extended periods)	Yes No	Are mechanical devices (such as winches) used to load logs/branches into chippers?	Yes No
Are workers able to perform the task with their arms close to their body?(i.e. not reaching away from their body or overhead)	Yes No	Are steps taken to minimise workers' exposure to prolonged periods of vibration when using hand-held power tools (eg, chainsaws, stump grinders)?	Yes No
Are workers able to perform the majority of their tasks without reaching away from their body or overhead?	Yes No		

Slips, trips and falls

Do workers clean up the work site as they go, in order to reduce the number of things that can cause people to trip and/or fall over?	Yes No	Is equipment put away (or collected together) after use?	Yes No
If using tree climbers, is there sufficient climbing equipment and climber knowledge to ensure that they do not fall?	Yes No	Are all ladders used stable and in good condition? (N.B. all ladders should be rated for industrial use and have a load rating of at least 120kg)	Yes No



Chemicals

Have you obtained a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for all the substances and chemicals used in your workplace? (this includes all oils, fuels, degreasers, lubricants, herbicides etc)	Yes No
Have you read each MSDS and identified which substances are classified as a "hazardous substance"?	Yes No
Have you got a register which has a list of the "hazardous substances" used and a copy of each "hazardous substance's" MSDS?	Yes No
Is a copy of each "hazardous substance's" MSDS available near where it is used?	Yes No
Have you done a written risk assessment for each "hazardous substance"?	Yes No

Have you identified ways to prevent people being exposed to "hazardous substances" and put those controls in place?	Yes No
Have you identified any 'hazardous substances' for which you have to provide health surveillance?	Yes No
Do ALL containers have a label showing exactly what substance is in it?	Yes No
Have you given workers using "hazardous substances" training in how to use those "hazardous substances" safely?	Yes No

Noise

Have areas where there is excessive noise (more than 85dB) been identified?	Yes No
Have steps been taken to minimise the amount of noise produced in noisy areas?	Yes No
Do workers have difficulty in communicating with each other during times of excessive noise exposure?	Yes No

Where it is not possible to reduce the noise levels, do workers wear hearing protection during the noise exposure, and have they been trained to use it?	Yes No
Are there signs on equipment indicating when hearing protection is required?	Yes No
Have steps been taken to ensure that "critical" situations (ie, commands when cutting a tree, danger etc) are able to be communicated between workers at all times?	Yes No

Traffic control/public protection

Are controls used to ensure that members of the public can not access high risk areas (eg, tree cutting, stump grinding, elevated work)?	Yes No
Are signs used to identify tree cutting operations in progress or road closures?	Yes No

Is debris removed from public access areas (eg, footpaths etc)?	Yes No
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Machinery and equipment

Does all equipment have operational safety devices to prevent operators and others accessing hazardous parts?	Yes No
Is your equipment regularly serviced and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions?	Yes No
Are all operators of equipment trained in how to use it safely?	Yes No

Are exclusion zones at ground level used around elevated work, chain saw use and/or stump grinder operation to keep people away from the high risk area?	Yes No
Do operators of equipment have the appropriate 'ticket' where necessary? (e.g. chainsaws, elevated work platforms etc)	Yes No

Electrical

<i>Work near overhead power lines:</i>	
Are suitable controls in place to ensure that people, equipment and falling tree parts do not enter the exclusion zone around the power lines?	Yes No
Are workers who work around overhead power lines trained in electrical awareness issues?	Yes No

<i>Work not near overhead power lines (eg, in the workshop or office):</i>	
Is electrical equipment connected through a safety switch?	Yes No
Is portable electrical equipment inspected and tested by a competent person (e.g. electrician)?	Yes No
Are damaged plugs, leads and sockets immediately removed from service?	Yes No

Heat stress/ultra violet (UV) protection

Is enough cool water made available to workers, especially in the summer months?	Yes No
Are cool, shaded rest areas available for workers?	Yes No
Are worker's characteristics taken into account when choosing workers and/or allocating jobs? (ie, things such as age, weight, physical fitness, medical conditions, acclimatisation, etc)	Yes No

Is work structured, where possible, to avoid the heaviest, most labour intensive tasks in the hottest part of the day?	Yes No
Are employees encouraged to wear light-weight, light-coloured and loose fitting clothing in hot areas?	Yes No
Is ultra violet radiation managed at the work site? (ie, shade, sunscreen, appropriate clothing, hats etc)	Yes No

First aid

Is a first aid kit/s available at the workplace?	Yes No
Are the first aid kits contents suitable for the types of injuries that may be sustained at your workplace?	Yes No
Are there procedures in place to address any people with allergies to insects, plants, etc?	Yes No

Is the first aid kit regularly checked and items replaced if they are no longer usable?	Yes No
Do workers have access to people trained in first-aid?	Yes No

Emergency procedures

Are workers required to wear high visibility clothing?	Yes No
Have you identified emergencies that may affect workers in their job? (e.g. medical, rescue, fire etc)	Yes No
Is there an emergency procedure to respond to these emergencies?	Yes No
Is everyone who is going to be at the workplace for extended periods (e.g. contractors) trained in the emergency procedure?	Yes No

Are appropriate fire extinguishers available and regularly inspected?	Yes No
Is there a procedure for responding to and recording incidents/injuries?	Yes No
If tree climbers are used, is there sufficient climbing equipment and another trained climber available to rescue a tree climber injured and/or stuck in a tree?	Yes No

Site assessment

Have you fully assessed the integrity of the tree to be worked upon, prior to workers commencing work?	Yes No
Have you assessed the site to ensure safety of people, and protection of buildings/equipment/services?	Yes No

Have you determined the MOST appropriate method of work for this tree and environment, given all the variables?	Yes No
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