

# NIOSH ALERT

## Preventing Falls and Electrocutions During Tree Trimming

### WARNING!

Many tree trimmers have died from falls or electrocutions.

Take the following steps to protect yourself from fatal falls or electrocution during tree trimming or cutting:

1. Conduct an initial and daily jobsite survey before beginning work to identify hazards and implement appropriate controls.
2. Always use the following safety procedures when working near power lines:
  - Assume that **all** power lines are energized and avoid **all** contact (direct or indirect) until the lines are verified as being de-energized.
  - Maintain safe working distances specified by OSHA [29 CFR 1910.268(q)(2)(iv)].
  - Use only nonconductive tools, materials, and personal protective equipment.
  - If work must be performed near a power line or within minimum working distances specified by OSHA [29 CFR 1910.268(q)(2)(iv)], make sure that your employer has contacted the utility company to discuss de-energizing and grounding or shielding the power lines.
3. Always use the following safe work procedures to prevent falls:
  - Inspect trees and limbs for structural weakness before climbing or cutting.
  - Use appropriate fall protection equipment.
  - Inspect all equipment before use to ensure that it is not damaged or defective.
  - Use safe work procedures to prevent the cutting of climbing ropes, lanyards, and safety belts or straps.
  - Use safe work procedures for climbing, felling, topping, and pruning trees.
4. Operate mobile equipment (for example, aerial buckets) only if you have been properly trained.
5. Do not perform tree trimming or cutting without appropriate safety training.



Tree trimmer at risk of falls and electrocution.

For additional information, see *NIOSH Alert: Request for Assistance in Preventing Falls and Electrocutions During Tree Trimming* [DHHS (NIOSH) 92-106], or call 1-800-35-NIOSH. Single copies of the Alert are available free from the following:

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