

Tree Trimming Safety Tips for Hurricane/Tornado Clean Up FactSheet

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Hurricanes and tornados can cause a lot of damage and destruction. Uprooted trees especially create many hazards for workers responsible for recovery and cleanup. When clearing and trimming uprooted trees workers need to practice safety.

Follow these safety tips when cleaning up trees after a storm:

- **Always assume that power lines are energized!**
- Perform a hazard assessment before starting work.
- Before clearing trees, contact the utility company to discuss de-energizing, grounding, or shielding of power lines.
- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment, including hard hats, safety glasses, protective footwear, and gloves.
- Use extreme caution when moving ladders and other equipment around downed trees and power lines.

Felling Trees

To “fell a tree” means more than just cutting it down. Felling means to cut the tree in such a way that it falls in the desired direction causing the least damage. **More people are killed while felling trees than during any other logging activity, so safety is important.**

- Eliminate or minimize exposure to potential hazards found at the tree and in the surrounding area.
- Look out for hazards and know where everyone in the immediate area is located.
- Wear proper personal protective equipment including eye, face, head, hand, and foot protection.
- Be aware of broken or hanging branches, attached vines, or dead trees that are leaning, because these hazards can cause injuries.

The Texas Department of Insurance,
Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC)
E-mail resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us
or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.



Photo courtesy of National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

- Be careful when cutting dead trees, because the tops could break off and cause injuries.
- If a tree is broken and under pressure, make small cuts to release some of the pressure before cutting up the section.
- Be careful of young trees that other trees have fallen against. They can act like spring poles and can propel back.
- If a tree has fallen, but not completely to the ground it may be lodged against another tree. Use extreme care to safely bring the tree to the ground.
- If possible, avoid felling into other trees or objects.
- Watch trees carefully while they fall. Trees may fall through other trees or objects and throw branches and objects back towards the worker or logger. For protection workers should take refuge behind a standing tree, if possible.

Remember to practice safety. Don't learn it by accident.

This fact sheet was published with information from the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) and the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC) and is considered factual at development.

Safety Violations Hotline
1-800-452-9595
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