Sample Safety Manual

Tree Trimming and Felling

**Introduction**

This manual contains safety policies designed to control risks associated with operations at **(Insert company name)** and provide the safest possible work environment for our employees. While this safety manual is intended to be comprehensive, it is impossible to cover every scenario, therefore if you have questions regarding a specific task contact your supervisor who can provide guidance.

The best ambassadors of our safety program are those performing the jobs daily. If you observe a safety issue or have a suggestion that could improve the safety measures outlined in this document, please speak with your supervisor. It takes the dedicated effort of the entire team to prevent workplace incidents.

Incidents are the result of unsafe conditions, acts or practices. Many incidents are caused using unsafe equipment, tools used in an unsafe manner or failure to follow safe work practices. Therefore, the implementation of a comprehensive safety program is critical to maintaining a safe work environment for all employees. To ensure a safe work environment, it is imperative that we strictly enforce our policy. Violations of safety policies and procedures could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If you have questions or need additional information regarding the contents of this manual, you should speak with your supervisor or their predetermined designee immediately.

**Safety policy statement**

Providing a safe work environment for **(Insert company name)** staff is of the utmost importance. The goal of our safety policy is to provide guidance on how to avoid risks associated with the jobs performed by our employees. It is impossible to provide guidelines for every situation; therefore, we depend on you, our staff, to make safe choices in your daily work. Our success depends on everyone performing their job in the safest possible manner.

**Safety is a team effort**

With any great team, each member must know their role and how to perform it well to achieve success. The same is true for safety teams.

**Management’s responsibilities:**

Providing a safe work environment and adequate supervision of operations, which includes as applicable:

* Providing a safe work environment and adequate supervision
* Provisioning of tools and equipment
* Providing proper safety equipment and clothing
* Training and on-site safety direction
* Inspecting work areas and operations periodically
* Ensuring prompt action is taken when unsafe conditions or actions are identified
* Ensuring all incidents are reported and properly investigated
* Reviewing incident reports to verify proper corrective action is taken

**Supervisor’s responsibilities:**

* Promoting safety awareness, and leading by example
* Ensuring employees are trained on safe work practices related to their assigned job tasks
* Ensuring safety equipment and protective devices are provided and properly used
* Conducting frequent safety inspections of all work areas and operations to improve and eliminate unsafe conditions
* Taking prompt, corrective action when unsafe conditions or unsafe actions are observed
* Investigating and reporting to management all incidents involving personnel or property
* Reviewing new equipment to identify potential risks
* Educating employees on the disciplinary policy as it relates to the safety policy; taking appropriate action when merited
* Arranging transportation and accompany the injured employee to the medical facility
* Facilitating paperwork and answering questions of both the treating physician and injured employee

**Employee’s responsibilities:**

* Following the safety policy and procedures
* Reporting unsafe conditions and practices to management immediately
* Keeping work areas clean and orderly always
* Operating equipment only if authorized and instructed on safe work procedures
* Reporting all incidents to management immediately and complete an incident report as soon as possible

**What to do if an incident occurs**

While every effort is made to avoid incidents, it is important to know what to do if one should occur. Acting quickly and getting the injured employee the treatment, they need as soon as possible can help to prevent further injury.

* Report all incidents, no matter how minor, immediately to management
* Prompt reporting ensures the employee receives proper treatment if it is required, and ensures appropriate corrective action is taken to avoid future injuries
* Perform first-aid and CPR, only if you are trained
* Follow established Bloodborne Pathogens procedures
* Arranging transportation and accompany the injured employee to the medical facility should be done by the supervisor
* Facilitating paperwork and answering questions of both the treating physician and injured employee should be done by the supervisor
* Incident Report forms must be completed by the supervisor and injured employee as soon as possible; route as directed on the form

Emergency action plans

Emergency situations such as fire, severe weather, bomb threat, etc., require swift and immediate action by our employees to ensure the safety of everyone. In the event of an emergency, our staff should be prepared for the following:

**Supervisor, management or designee for their respective areas will:**

* Direct actions of personnel
* Know the location of fire extinguishers
* Know who is first-aid and CPR trained
* Identify individuals who need special assistance during evacuations and plan to ensure their safety
* Familiarize employees with evacuation route
* Ensure the building is clear and account for personnel after building evacuation

**Fire evacuation:**

* Turn off nearby equipment and walk to the nearest exit, when the fire alarm sounds and if it is safe to do so
* Assemble away from the building at the designated assembly area
* Remain outside until the all-clear is given by responding fire personnel
* The supervisor or their designee will account for all individuals

**Severe weather:**

* Heavy rainfall- Avoid driving into areas where heavy flooding is noted to have occurred. Do not drive into standing water if uncertain of the depth. Reduce speed and if necessary, pull over to side of the roadway. Park in a safe location and activate emergency flashers.
* Lightning activity- Remain inside vehicle and listen to local weather. Proceed to a safe location outside of the lightning activity.
* High winds- When driving in high winds be alert to the potential effect of strong side winds on the vehicle, specifically at highway speeds. Reduce speed and if necessary, pull over to side of the roadway, park in a safe location and activate emergency flashers.
* Tornados- Never try to outrun a tornado. Get out of the car and find shelter. If unable to get to a safe structure, lie down in a ditch or low area. Lie face down to stay protected from flying debris and cover the back of your head and neck with hands.

### Ice and Snow- Bridges and overpasses freeze first, so always slow down and avoid sudden changes in speed or direction. Clear all window glass, light lenses and covers prior to driving. Keep windows clear and keep speed steady and slow. Use brakes cautiously. If stuck in the snow, straighten the wheels, and accelerate slowly. Avoid spinning the tires.

**Recordkeeping**

Documentation is a critical component for maintaining a safe working environment. The following records are retained in personnel files:

* Employee training records
* Certifications
* Incident reports
* Hazard identification and corrective actions
* Signed acknowledgments
* Equipment inspection and certifications

**Violence in the workplace**

It is the policy of **(Insert company name)** that violence or the threat of violence, even in a joking manner, is not appropriate and subject to disciplinary procedures, up to and including termination.

Employees are to report any acts or threats of violence to their supervisor immediately. Report the behavior or threats made, give facts of where and when the event occurred, what was said and include any witnesses.

Anyone who observes a weapon on the premises is required to report it to the supervisor immediately.

**Biological exposure control plan**

Within the scope of your job, you may encounter blood or other bodily fluids that have the risk of transmitting blood and airborne diseases. Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE) if it is necessary for you to be in contact with blood or other body fluids. For more information on biological exposures, visit www.CompSourceMutual.com.

**Ergonomics**

**(Insert company name)** has an Ergonomics Program to educate and train employees on the basic principles of ergonomics and proper body mechanics. The program includes written guidelines to prevent musculoskeletal injuries caused by exertion, repetitive motion or sustained posture; these include back injuries, sprains, strains, carpal tunnel syndrome or other cumulative trauma disorders.

Depending on the physical demands of a job; procedures may need to be changed to minimize the risk of a cumulative trauma injury. It is important to request an ergonomic evaluation if you believe your work tasks or procedures need to be changed. Once the ergonomic evaluation is complete, modifications identified should be implemented. It is important that employees follow the recommendations and modifications to help prevent a cumulative trauma injury.

**General policies for all operations**

* Employees should perform their job tasks in a safe manner, speak with your supervisor if you have any questions regarding safe work practices
* Illness or extreme fatigue may impact your ability to perform your job safely; it is the employee’s responsibility to monitor their well-being and ensure they are physically able to perform their job tasks safely
* Horseplay of any kind is strictly forbidden, and employees who willfully engage in horseplay are subject to disciplinary procedures, up to and including termination
* Clean and orderly work areas prevent injuries; take time each day to keep your work area clear of unnecessary materials, tools and equipment
* All exits and stairways should be clear and free of obstructions
* Use only approved, grounded electrical extension cords
* Extension cords are to be unplugged, coiled and stored in their designated locations when not in use
* Dispose of extension cords that show wear and tear immediately
* Follow proper lifting techniques and seek assistance when necessary
* Ensure all equipment (dolly, etc.) is in good condition before use
* Visually check equipment and machinery before use and ensure work area is clear
* Never leave machines or equipment running while unattended
* Loose clothing, long hair and jewelry should not be worn by employees working around or near moving machinery or equipment
* Use of a personal music device in the work area, including vehicles, is at the discretion of the immediate supervisor
* Smoking is strictly prohibited

**Slip, trip and fall prevention**

* Footwear should be flat, slip-resistant with a closed toe and heel
* Floors and work area should be kept picked up, clean and dry; use designated wet floor signage whenever necessary
* Tools, equipment, material and other articles should be properly stored and cleared from passageways
* Use a step stool or ladder when reaching overhead
* Do not stand on boxes, equipment, railing or other elevated surfaces

**Ladders**

* Inspect ladders before every use
* Boxes, equipment, railing or other elevated surfaces should not be used as ladders
* Maintain three-point contact (two hands, one foot or both feet, one hand) when ascending or descending ladders; always face the ladder
* When using a step ladder, do not climb higher than the second step from the top
* When using an extension ladder, do not climb higher than the third rung from the top
* Do not use metal ladders near energized electrical circuits
* Tool belts and hand lines will be used to move tools up and down the ladder

**Extreme temperature conditions**

**(Insert company name)** operations may expose employees to extreme temperatures. Employees are responsible for monitoring their physical condition both on and off the job and notifying the supervisor of any condition that may impact their ability to tolerate extreme temperatures. For more information on safely working in extreme temperatures, visit www.CompSourceMutual.com.

**Hazard communication**

Chemical substances and mixtures used by the company are to be evaluated and approved before use. The associated risks with products should be communicated to employees before use and can be found by reviewing the product Safety Data Sheet (SDS). Annual training on proper hazard communication is provided with additional training as new products are introduced in the work environment. For more information on hazard communication, visit [www.CompSourceMutual.com](http://www.CompSourceMutual.com).

**Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

**Eye protection:**

Appropriate safety glasses, goggles, or face shields shall be worn when the work may result in a potential risk of injury to your face or eyes. Eye protection is provided by the company and employees are responsible for keeping track of and maintaining the equipment in good condition. Damaged equipment must be replaced immediately.

**Head protection:**

Approved head protection (hard hats) must be worn when the work may result in a potential risk of injury to your head. Hard hats are normally required at every construction site at the discretion of the general contractor. Head protection must be worn as recommended by the manufacturer to include replacement by the stamped date. Employees are responsible for keeping track of and maintaining this equipment in good condition.

# Hearing protection:

The company has elected to implement a hearing conservation program to control the risks associated with high noise levels in the work area. Approved ear protection shall be worn under all work conditions that have been determined by the company to exceed acceptable noise levels. Hearing protection shall be provided by the company and employees are responsible for keeping track of and maintaining the equipment in good condition. For more information on hearing conservation, visit www.CompSourceMutual.com.

**Respiratory Protection:**

The company has elected to implement a respiratory protection program to control the risks associated with workplace exposure to dusts, vapors, fumes and other airborne particulate. Employees are responsible for keeping track of and maintaining the equipment in good condition. For more information on respiratory protection, visit www.CompSourceMutual.com.

**Foot and hand protection:**

Shoes or boots suitable to the type of work and work area conditions shall always be worn. Slip resistant soles may be required in some operations. Safety-toed footwear will be required in all locations where a higher-level risk of foot injury exists. Open toe shoes are prohibited from all construction site work areas.

Hand protection will be chosen based on the risk potential and utilized by the employee during the performance of their assigned work activities. However, in operations such a pedestal grinding or other situations where the glove may cause or contribute to an injury, other methods of hand protection shall be used. Consult your supervisor regarding glove selection and use. All gloves are required to be provided by the company.

**Outerwear protection:**

Regular work clothing will be well fitted and of cotton or other natural fiber. Shirts will be long sleeved for protection against tree limbs and poisonous plants. Shorts and tank top shirts are prohibited. Employees are responsible for keeping track of and maintaining their clothing and company provided gear in good condition or replaced as necessary. Contaminated clothing or gear will be removed and replaced when the contaminants pose a health or fire hazard.

High visibility clothing such as vests or colored t-shirts will be worn in the work situations where visibility is critical such as near public traffic areas.

Protective chaps will be worn while operating chain saws.

The use of Tyvek or other non-porous clothing increases the risk of heat stress. Employees utilizing these garments will be monitored during the work performance. For more information on Temperature Extremes, visit www.CompSourceMutual.com.

**Fall protection**

Work in trees, on raised platforms, ladders or other elevated work locations creates the risk of serious injury. Appropriate fall protection in the form of railings, barriers or personal fall protection harnesses will be used anytime work is performed above normal grade. For more information on fall protection, visit [www.CompSourceMutual.com](http://www.CompSourceMutual.com).

**Aerial bucket truck**

Only trained personnel will operate any aerial lifts in accordance with manufacturer’s recommended practices. No modifications or alterations will be made to any lift control.

Site conditions to include overhead electrical lines and adequate site access will determine if an aerial lift will be used.

The outriggers will be used even on level ground. The ground will be checked for soft spots, bumps, holes and other ground conditions that may affect the aerial lift’s stability.

Fall protection will be used while working in the aerial lift and employees will remain within the bucket, always standing on the floor of the bucket. The aerial lift will not be moved while employees are in the bucket.

No employees are to stand below the bucket, or any suspended load held by the bucket.

For more information on aerial lift safety, visit [www.CompSourceMutual.com](http://www.CompSourceMutual.com).

**Hand tools**

Hand tools are to be used only for the purpose for which they are designed. They will be inspected before use and replaced as required.

Tools with burrs, cracks, mushroom heads, or broken, loose or splintered handles shall not be used.

Do not leave tools on overhead work areas or other areas where they pose a potential risk of injury, from falling and striking someone working below.

Never leave tools lying around where they may be tripped over or interfere with other work in progress.

Do not carry an edged or pointed tool in pockets or belts unless the point or edge is protected.

**Portable power tools**

Do not attempt to operate any power tools without proper instruction and authorization.

Never use any portable power tools without checking for both proper safeguard operation, (e.g. safety on pneumatic nail gun and spring-loaded guard on Skill saw) and electrical continuity. Questionable items should be inspected and tested by qualified personnel. Always report defects or minor shocks on any piece of equipment. Any electrical equipment or cord without a ground prong intact shall not be used.

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) shall be used in all wet locations.

Electrical cords should be protected from damage by oil or wear and not left in aisles where they may be run over by trucks or other equipment or cause a tripping hazard. Never run an electrical cord through a doorway.

**Chainsaws**

Only trained personnel will operate chain saws and will adhere to the practices as follow:

a. Prior to starting the saw the operator will ensure that the blade has been sharpened and the proper tension is set.

b. The saw will be started while on the ground.

c. The saw will be shut off or the chain brake engaged if the employee is moving across hazardous terrain, or the saw is carried.

d. No saw will be left running while unattended.

**Stump Grinders and chippers**

Only trained personnel will operate stump grinders and chippers. The chipper and grinder will be inspected for loose parts, missing guards, etc., prior to starting and at no time will the chipper or grinder be left in operation while unattended.

A safe zone will be established around both the chipper and stump grinder to prevent contact with the equipment by site workers.

Neither the chipper nor stump grinder will be moved while in operation.

Placement of the chipper will ensure that all flying chip materials are properly captured and not directed at site personnel or the public.

**Stump Grinders and chippers**

The risks associated with the proposed work will be identified and controlled using proper planning and work procedures. All tools and equipment will be inspected before use.

**Site assessment**

A site assessment will be performed prior to the beginning of any work. Any hazards will be noted and included in the plan. Hazards will be eliminated or minimized in the surrounding area.

a. Electrical lines will be identified and as possible de-energized during the planned work. If the lines cannot be de-energized, minimum clearance distance will be identified and adhered to by affected personnel.

b. If the work is near public traffic, proper barricading will be installed to create a safe work zone.

c. In felling operations, the tree size, configuration and condition will be considered as well as the planned fall direction and travel.

**Site assessment**

Trees will be inspected for strength and stability before climbing. Inspections will include tree limbs for strength, 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.

An emergency rescue plan will be in place before any climbing is performed on site.

All ropes and slings used for climbing or lowering of limbs will be inspected prior to use and replaced as required.

**Trimming**

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 accidents.

Maintain 100 percent tie-off status to an appropriate anchor point.

Whenever possible plan the cuts with the chainsaw at or below chest height.

Plan the cuts taking into consideration the weight and length of the limb as well as where and how the limb is to be lowered to the ground.

Do not leave cut limbs in a tree.

**Felling**

Determine the tree’s felling direction. Address forward lean, back lean, and side lean issues.

Determine the proper amount of hinge wood to safely guide the tree’s fall. Always plan a retreat path to a safe location.

If broken trees are under pressure, determine the direction of the pressure and make small cuts to release it.

Use extreme care when felling a tree that has not fallen completely to the ground and is lodged against another tree.

Never turn your back on a falling tree.

Be alert and avoid objects thrown back by a tree as it falls.

**Material handling and storage**

Employees shall evaluate the object(s) to be lifted prior to attempting the lift. Get help or divide the load and always utilize proper body mechanics when lifting.

Lifting aids such as portable cranes, front loaders, back hoes, hand trucks, skids, hoists or power lift trucks should be used to move heavy objects whenever possible.

Work gloves should be worn when handling heavy or rough objects. Foot protection is required when there is a potential risk of foot injury.

Do not stand under loads, which are suspended by ropes, chains or cables. Stand clear when ropes, cables and chains are under tension. Check the rope, cable or chain prior to use as a lifting aid.

When power equipment is being used to raise or lower materials outside of the operator’s direct view, one person in clear view of both the load and the operator shall give standard hand signals and the operator shall accept his signals only.

Stack materials to facilitate subsequent handling on the job site to minimize travel.

All pallets and containers with protruding nails must be bent over or removed as soon as possible.

Adequate lighting shall be provided for all work areas. If in doubt about the light level, notify your supervisor for evaluation.

**Motor vehicle operation**

The following requirements are in place because of the high risks associated with motor vehicle operation:

* Employees who operate vehicles on behalf of the company must have a valid driver’s license, operator, commercial or chauffeur’s license, as required for the equipment being operated
* Only company employees are permitted to operate company-owned equipment and vehicles

Obeying traffic laws and regulations:

* + Employees are required to obey all traffic regulations
  + Cost for traffic violations such as a citation is the employee’s responsibility
  + Employees convicted of two or more moving violations within a 12-month period cannot operate company vehicles
  + All vehicle incidents must be reported, as required by city and state reporting procedures
  + Employees involved in vehicle collisions must report the incident to their supervisor or designee immediately after contacting the local law enforcement agency

**Safety policy/procedure acknowledgment**

By my signature below, I acknowledge I have received and read the Company's Safety Policy/Procedures, and I have been given an adequate opportunity to ask questions and receive clarification of any area of the policy/procedures. I agree to abide by the provisions outlined in the **(Insert company name)** Safety Policy/Procedure and understand that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of my employment.

I have received training by the company for the duties associated with my job, and I understand the potential hazards and physical requirements of these duties as well as the necessary precautions to control these hazards.

I have been informed and understand I am to report to my supervisor any incident and injury occurring while performing the duties of my job, or if in their absence, the next available senior company representative. An Incident Investigation Report must be completed and signed immediately, as is reasonable under the injury circumstances, by me after my injury.

I have been informed and understand I am to immediately report any unsafe acts and/or conditions discovered during the performance of my job duties.

Employee's signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Witness signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_