



Why your Accident Prevention goal should be . . . **LESS THAN ZERO**

We must define one term before we start: An accident we define as *any* unplanned event.

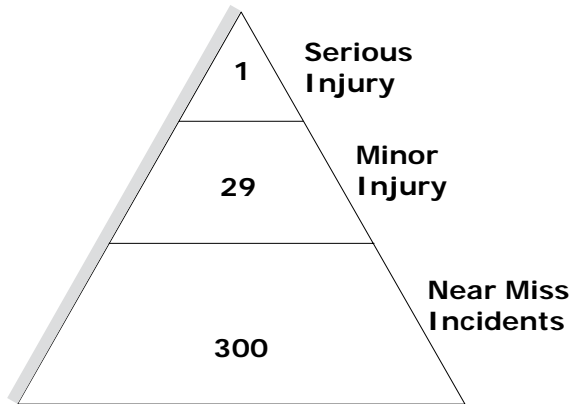
There is a common understanding among safety professionals: “Frequency breeds severity.” In other words, the more frequently you have accidents, the more likely it becomes that you will suffer an accident that is serious.

There is a statistical relationship between near misses, minor injury/damage accidents and really serious accidents. This is often expressed as an “accident pyramid.” The idea was first published by W.H. Heinrich in 1931, in a book entitled *Industrial Accident Prevention*.

So, what are the odds that a serious injury will occur? The exact ratios between the different accident types will vary, and in tree care they will depend on the accident causation and possibly other factors. The important point is that for all trades, some form of accident pyramid exists.

If an organization does not properly control risks, the *outcome* of an accident often depends on chance. Because the outcome of

Heinrich’s Accident Pyramid



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an accident cannot be accurately predicted, the only way to effectively reduce accidents is by controlling the underlying causes of *all* the different accident types. By tackling these underlying accident causes, the losses from all the different types of preventable accidents will be eliminated.

It's important to understand that 90 percent of all

accidents are caused by unsafe behaviors.

So if "Zero" means no accidents, the term "Less than Zero" means no exposure. In other words, control behaviors to avoid exposure and you control accidents.

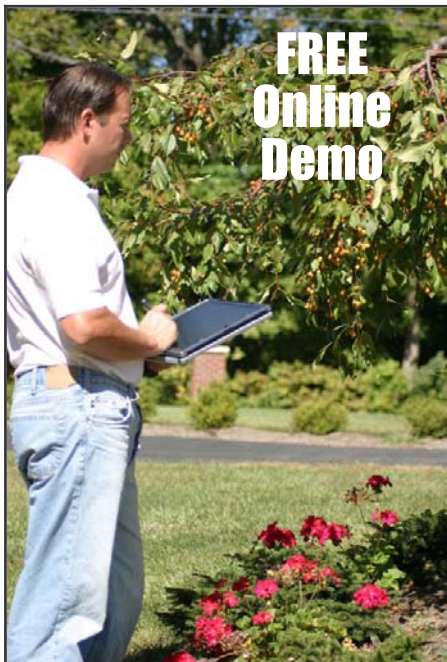
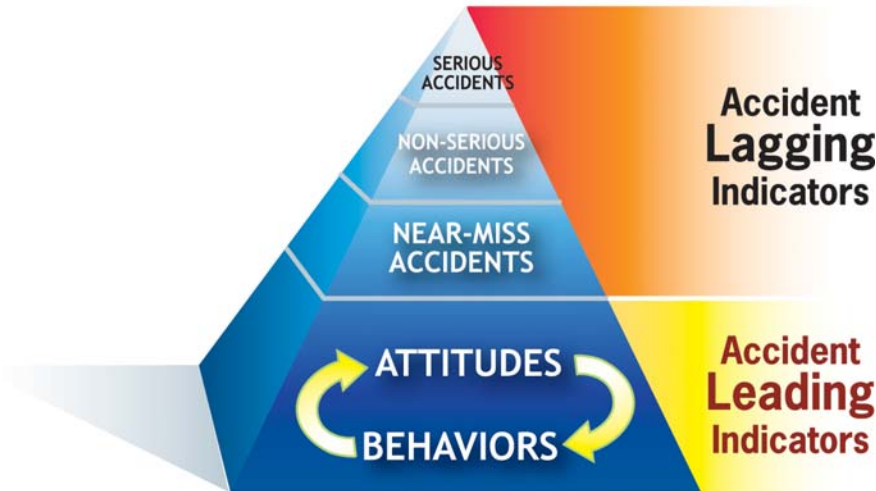
To illustrate this philosophy, TCIA's Certified Treecare Safety Professional program updated Heinrich's pyramid to look "below" the lagging indicators of accidents at the so-called "leading indicators." We call it the CTSP Accident Pyramid.

Sometimes attitudes lead to behaviors, and sometimes it can be argued that behaviors can shape attitudes. Can you think of an example of both situations?

The important point is that if we are able to influence attitudes and behaviors, we can drastically reduce accidents.

TW

ACCIDENT PREVENTION PYRAMID



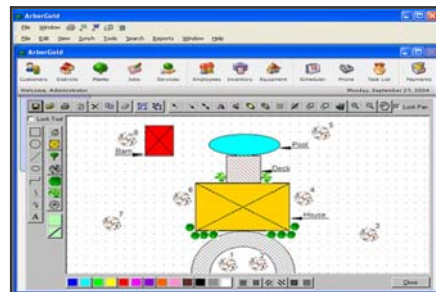
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