

The

TreeWorker

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Storms = Hazards!

At this time of year in many parts of the country, the effects of high winds, heavy rains and lightning are making tree work even more hazardous.

You should approach every job by assessing the workplace hazards, coming up with a plan to reduce or eliminate the hazards, and communicating everything to the crew through a job briefing. You certainly should follow this procedure in the immediate aftermath of a storm!

For additional guidance on dealing with storm-damaged trees, please see this month's bilingual Mr. Safety on page 7.

Sometimes the storm-caused hazards are obvious and fairly easy to measure, as with this picture of a lightning-struck oak. Figuring out how to do the removal without unreasonable risk to the crew and the public can be another matter! In this case, securing the tree with load-rated binders, using low-impact rigging techniques with surrounding trees for rigging points and bringing in an aerial lift reduced the hazard to an acceptable level.



Most storm-related tree hazards are more difficult to detect and quantify.

A fallen electrical conductor could have energized the tree, fallen limbs, or even other conductive objects on the ground around the tree, such as swing sets and chain link fences.

Limbs under tension can snap unexpectedly or break prematurely when being cut. "Read the tree" carefully before you begin cutting.

When working on a downed tree, try to work from the outside in and from the top down. Unless or until the trunk is flat on the ground such that it cannot roll, it is best to have only one person cutting on the tree.

Broken branches can lodge in the canopy. Cracked branches can fail unexpectedly.

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Position yourself out of harm's way.

One of the most difficult-to-detect and dangerous tree situations after a storm is the total tree failure caused by saturated soils and root system failure. Total tree failures are common after hurricanes dump massive amounts of rain. The combination of high winds and unstable soil can bring down susceptible trees.

Among the most susceptible are large, overmature trees that may already be suffering some root loss through decay or man's activities or shallow-rooted, forest fringe trees in new construction areas.

Unless you see soil heaving on one side of the tree's base, indicating that failure is imminent, it can be difficult to predict total tree failure. It is best therefore to be aware of the conditions that cause it and the type of tree in which it is likeliest to be a problem.

Working after a storm is not Situation Normal! Stay safe with these three steps:

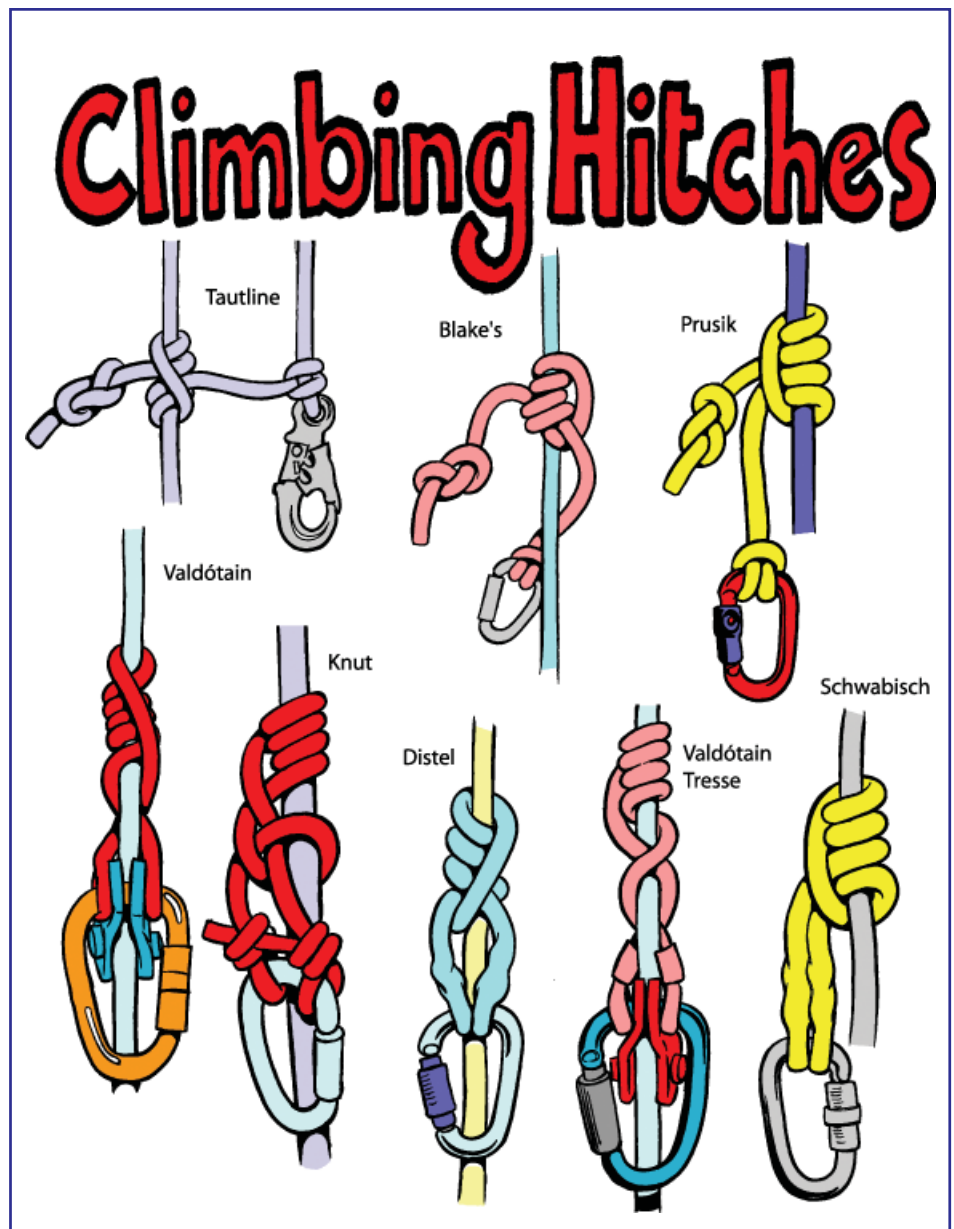
1. Assess the hazards.
2. Decide how to reduce or eliminate the hazards.
3. Communicate the plan to everyone on the crew through job briefing.



Typical storm-related hazards: Electricity, limbs under tension, tree parts that could still fail, poor footing, etc.



Tornadoes wreak havoc on trees! National Severe Storms Laboratory photo, taken in Texas.



STORMWORK SAFETY

TRABAJAR SEGURAMENTE CON ÁRBOLES DAÑADAS POR UNA TORMENTA



Váyese a la punta de la rama y córtala.
Go to the end of the branch and cut it.

Utilice su serrucho telescópico y cortalas donde puedas.
Use your pole saw and cut it where you can

Andale pues, haga una buena corte al tronco para que quite la rama entero.
All right then, make a good cut at the trunk in order to take off the whole branch.



Arreglar daño de tormenta puede ser engañoso. A menudo hay peligros que no se encuentra en trabajo normal.

Fixing storm damaged limbs can be tricky. Often there are dangers that you don't find in normal work

Se pondrá en peligro. Estará mas arriba que su horcadura de amarre.
You'll be in danger. You'll be higher than your tie in point

¡No alcanzará la rama quebrada! No hay que desmocharlas y dejar "picos". Va a poner su reputación en peligro.
You will not be able to reach them. You shouldn't stub them off. You're going to put you're reputation in danger.

Va a cortar mas que un tercer de la copa y dejará el arbol en peligro de problemas en el futuro por causa de estrés.
You're going to cut more than a third of the canopy. The tree will be under stress and susceptible to future problems.

¿Que harías tu? What would you do?

Sea profesional, si usted no tiene la experiencia en reconocer situaciones peligrosas o podar el arbol dañada corectamente, consiga instrucción de un arbolista que tanga mas experiencia.

Be professional. If you don't have the experience to recognize the hazards or to prune the damaged tree properly, then have a more experienced arborist guide you.

