

For Immediate Release

Homeowner Tree Care Accidents in 2014

The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) conducted an analysis of 37 civilian tree care-related accidents reported by the media in 2014. TCIA is a trade association that advances the tree care industry and discourages homeowners from taking unnecessary risks caring for their trees.

While these numbers are not representative of all – or even most – tree care accidents involving non-professionals, they provide insight into the types of hazards homeowners are likely to encounter while attempting tree work.

The findings were grim: Twenty-three of the accidents (60 percent) were fatal. “Homeowners may not realize how dangerous tree work can be, and how much they’re risking by taking the ‘do-it-yourself’ approach,” says Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, standards and compliance for TCIA. “Lack of training, equipment, or situational awareness undoubtedly contributed to these incidents, which could have been avoided by hiring a professional tree care company.”

The median age of the victim was 62, and the oldest victim was 76. The youngest reported victim was a 3-year-old toddler who tragically walked into the path of a tree his father was felling and was struck and killed. Three of the 37 victims, including the 3-year-old, were uninvolved bystanders.

Most homeowners were struck by a tree while attempting to fell it, or were hit by limbs, wires, or chain saws. Others fell or were electrocuted. **Chart A** provides more details on the accidents.

Occasionally, these incident are high-profile; Greg Norman, the pro golfer, is the lone “struck by chain saw” statistic. He claimed to be lucky to still have his left hand after a chain saw accident. The famed Australian, who won two majors and 20 U.S. PGA Tour titles, was trimming a sea grape tree at his home near Jupiter Island, Florida, when the accident occurred.

Norman was part of another dominant group in these statistics: the victims who were working alone at the time of the accident.

CHART A

Exposure Type - All Accidents	
Contact - 27	
Struck by tree	19
Struck by tree limb	6
Struck by cable or guy wire	1
Struck by chain saw	1
Fall - 8	
Fall from tree	6
Fall from front end loader	1
Fall from ladder	1
Harmful Environment - 2	
Electrocution	1
Electric shock, step potential	1

In two-thirds of all cases where it could be determined, the victims undertook hazardous tree work with nobody to spot them, nobody to assist them, and nobody to advise them when it might have been prudent to stop and seek out an expert.

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About the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA): Founded in 1938, TCIA is a public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture. It has more than 2,200 member companies who recognize stringent safety and performance standards and who are required to carry liability insurance. TCIA also has the nation's only Accreditation program that helps consumers find tree care companies that adhere to industry standards for quality and safety' maintain trained, professional staff; and are dedicated to ethical and professional business practices. With access to the latest and best safety standards and training, the typical TCIA member company has 50 percent fewer accidents than a typical non-member.

Editors: If you would like additional information or digital photos, please contact marketing@tcia.org.