

For Immediate Release

Occupational Tree Care Accidents in 2014

The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) reviewed 126 occupational tree care accidents reported by the media, OSHA and industry colleagues in 2014. Of these, 81 were fatal. The median age of the victim for all incidents was 42.

Further analysis revealed trends seen in previous years: Monday is still statistically the most dangerous day of the week for tree care professionals, with Friday ranking second. "It is reasonable to assume that so-called 'critical error' behaviors - such as mind-not-on-task or eyes-not-on-task - are more prevalent on these days," says Peter Gerstenberger, TCIA's senior advisor for safety, standards and compliance.

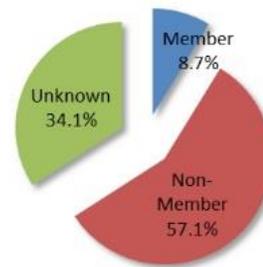
A more influential factor, however, is association membership: A disproportionate number of these incidents were experienced by arborists working for companies who are not members of TCIA. (**Chart A**)

"Tree care companies with no professional affiliation, such as TCIA, may not have the resources or motives to incorporate safety training on the jobsite," explains Gerstenberger. "Furthermore, TCIA has found ignorance or lack of training to be a factor in many of these incidents."

This assertion is supported by **Chart B**, which shows how preventable many of these fatal incidents were and catalogues them by exposure types.

For example, in eight of the reported 12 electrocution incidents, plus the electric shock/burn incident, the victims were using aluminum ladders and/or conductive tools at the time of the incident. In eight of the 25 falls, the victims were clearly not secured. In the palm trimming deaths, the climbers were

**CHART A
Who had incidents?**



Exposure Type - fatal incidents		CHART B
Contact - 44		
Asphyxiation:	palm fronds	3
	rigging line	1
Caught in:	brush chipper	2
	barber chair	1
Crushed	log	2
Struck by:	chipper disc cover	1
	off-road vehicle	1
	chain saw	1
	motor vehicle	6
	tree	15
	tree limb	11
Exposure to harmful environment - 12		
Electrocution	Indirect contact aluminum ladder	3
	Indirect contact conductive tool	5
	Unknown	2
	Electric shock/burn	1
	Heat illness	1
Fall - 25		
Fall from:	aerial lift	11
	ladder	1
	tree	11
	height, unknown	2

secured to the trunk below the frond skirts, a technique that has been widely publicized for years as being fraught with risk.

"It seems clear to us that the practitioners most in need of improved knowledge and training are also the least inclined to seek out training opportunities," says Gerstenberger. "As such, it is our responsibility as an association and industry to facilitate safety training opportunities for tree care professionals who need it the most."

Arborist Safety Training Institute

The Arborist Safety Training Institute (ASTI), launched by the Tree Care Industry Association Foundation (TCIAF), seeks to fulfill this responsibility by providing quality, local and affordable safety training to working arborists.

ASTI will provide grants for safety training to minimize consequent deaths and injuries, and promote overall workforce safety that is critical for the tree care industry. Learn more about ASTI at TCIA.org/Foundation/ASTI or contact Sarah Winslow at (603)-314-5380 or asti@tcia.org.

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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.