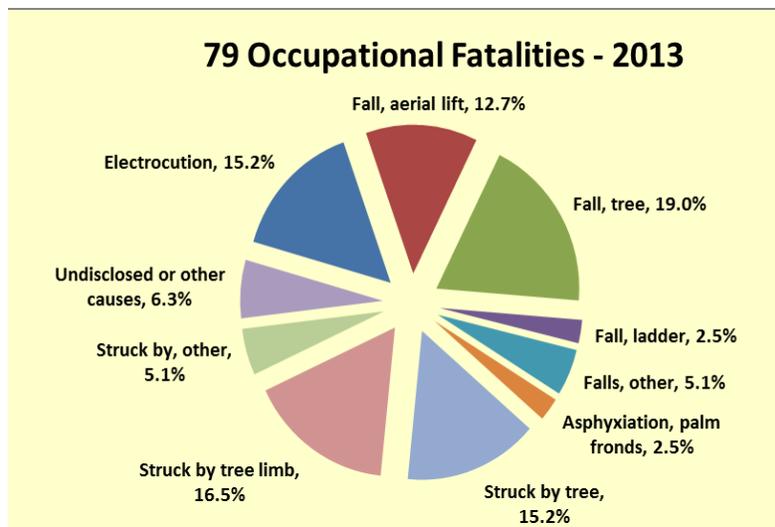


Occupational Tree Care Accidents in 2013

The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) reviewed 158 occupational tree care accidents reported by the media in 2013. Of these accidents, 79 were fatal. The average age of the deceased was 40.6, and the average age of the serious accident victim was 37.7.

These findings are very similar to the 2012 findings, where TCIA recorded 84 fatal accidents. However, the number of non-fatal accidents increased dramatically from the 44 reported during the 2012 calendar year.



Summary of Findings

An analysis of the **fatal accidents** categories revealed the following insights:

Of the 14 fatalities attributed to **falls from trees**:

- Six could be attributed to failure of the tree, or a major limb.
- Two were caused by climbing system failure.
- In one instance, the victim cut through his own climbing system. In a separate incident, the victim was tied to the limb that was cut.

Of the 12 fatalities attributed to **electrocution**:

- Three victims were electrocuted through conductive tools or equipment such as metal saws, gas-powered stick saws, metal ladders and un-insulated lifts.
- Five victims made direct contact with conductors.
- It could not be determined how five of the victims made contact.

There was insufficient detail in the accounts of the 12 **struck-by-tree** fatalities to allow any further analysis. Similarly, the 13 **struck-by-tree-limb** fatalities lacked enough detail for further analysis.

Of the nine fatalities attributed to **falls-from-aerial-lifts**:

- The victim was not secured in the bucket in six instances. In one of these six cases, the victim's ejection from the bucket was caused by a cut tree limb striking the bucket.
- There were two cases in which the upper boom failed, apparently without any external "assistance," sending the operator to the ground.
- There was one case in which a blow from a falling limb caused the boom to shear off.

Non-fatal accidents are not reported in the media with enough consistency and clarity to allow analysis.

These sobering numbers are a stark reminder of the dangers of tree care, and highlight the need for tree care companies, along with homeowners and the property managers who hire them to uphold the highest standards for worker safety.

"Unfortunately for the industry overall, serious accidents seem to be increasing," said Peter Gerstenberger, arborist for TCIA. "We need to transform the industry and create a safety culture that will keep all tree workers safe in an inherently hazardous occupation."

TCIA compiled the data using Google alerts, OSHA investigations, and reports from colleagues in the industry. Most accounts of fatal tree care accidents identified the tree care company involved, which allowed TCIA to calculate the percentage of accidents that involved TCIA member companies.

TCIA found that only 12.7% of the recorded accidents can be attributed to TCIA member companies. Non TCIA member companies are responsible for 72.2% of the recorded accidents. The remaining 15.2% accidents lack attribution due to insufficient data.