

U. S. Dept. of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Raleigh Area Office
300 Fayetteville Street Mall, Room 438
Raleigh, NC 276011
(919) 856-4770, fax (919) 856-4183



April 7, 2004

Dear Employer in the Landscaping and Horticultural Services Industry:

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) wants to make you aware of hazards in the Landscape and Horticultural Services industry in which you conduct business, which often lead to the death of workers on the job.

In the southern United States (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi) during fiscal year 2002, there were 19 fatalities investigated by Federal OSHA in your industry. In fiscal year 2003, there were 28 fatalities investigated. This increase of worker deaths is alarming, and we are seeking your assistance in preventing these needless and tragic losses of life.

The major causes of death on the job were falls, being struck by equipment or vehicles, electrocution, and drowning. The following are descriptions of a few accidents that occurred within the past three years where workers were killed:

- A 37 year-old employee who was operating an Exmark Lazer Z Ultra Cut 60 riding lawn mower on a steep slope near a lake drowned after the equipment rolled over. The employee was pinned underneath the equipment after falling into the lake. The mower was not designed to operate on a slope.
- A 51 year-old employee was trimming branches in a tree, and he did not properly secure his lifeline to the tree. He fell approximately 40 feet to his death due to the lack of adequate fall protection.
- A 46 year-old employee was operating a chain saw and cutting branches from palm trees. The branches were in close proximity to overhead electrical power lines, and the employee was working from a metal ladder. The employee was electrocuted when the palm branch or frond fell onto the energized lines which carried approximately 7,600 volts.
- A 60 year-old employee was trimming shrubs in a median strip. He walked to the company truck which was parked in the road, and while behind the truck, he was struck and killed by a vehicle. The employee was not wearing a high visibility vest, and the high visibility traffic cones had been removed from behind the company truck.

The hazards mentioned above are not the only types of hazards that employees may be exposed to in your industry. Other hazards that may be present while employees are performing their duties include lightning, noise, lack of protective gear for the eyes, head and face and extremities, moving parts of machinery and equipment, failing to lock-out or tag-out equipment during maintenance and repair, lack of high visibility vests when exposed to vehicular traffic, and lack of effective training, just to mention a few.

Assistance is available so that you can take a proactive approach in eliminating these hazards. By voluntarily complying with the requirements of the OSH Act, and protecting your employees, your business becomes more profitable.

The State of North Carolina, with funding from OSHA, provides consultation and training through the North Carolina Department of Labor's Bureau of Consultative Services. These consultation services, which are free, may be reached at the following address:

**North Carolina, Department of Labor
Division of Occupational Safety & Health
1101 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 7699-1101
1-800-625-2267 or (919) 807-2899
<http://www.nclabor.com>**

A flyer has been provided to you with this correspondence conveying information on the types of hazards that have been discussed. We are contacting associations within your industry in an effort to increase awareness to the hazards that affect you. Our desire is to work cooperatively with all affected parties. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call Federal OSHA's Raleigh Area Office at (919) 856-4770.

The information contained in this letter is accessible to you on the OSHA Web site at www.osha.gov. This web site provides valuable information about OSHA, such as safety and health standards, electronic tools on various topics, training, and interpretation letters.

Thank you in advance for your interest in workplace safety and health, and we look forward to working with you to reduce injuries, illnesses and fatalities in the Landscaping and Horticulture industry. Remember that one worker killed on the job is one too many.

Sincerely,



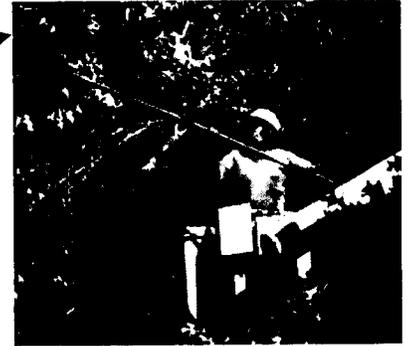
Suzanne M. Street
Area Director

Enclosure

Landscaping Hazard Alert

Be aware of overhead power lines when trimming branches! Contact with energized lines can be DEADLY!

Always maintain a safe distance – at least 10 ft., or have the power lines de-



Don't operate lawn mowing equipment on steep slopes!

You could fall into water, or down the slope and be trapped under the equipment!



Always wear protective equipment when working near vehicular traffic!

Protective clothing, such as reflective vests, can provide warning to oncoming traffic!



Contact your local OSHA Area Office for more information on how to eliminate these and other hazards.

North Carolina OSHA
Ph: 919-807-2900

USDOL - OSHA
Ph: 919-856-4770

OSHA Occupational
Safety and Health
Administration