

Arborists' Big Job:

Cut Out the

"Little"

ACCIDENTS

Results of another *Weeds and Turf*
field research project.



Safety rope is the best accident preventer for climbers. But while keeping eyes peeled for trouble aloft, this article says, look out for the routine practices which may cause mishaps.

TREE workers have an appalling number of accidents each year. Lost job time of tree trimmers is regularly 6 to 7 times as great as for other industry averages. Tree companies, as a result, have to pay higher insurance and workmen's compensation rates.

Earlier this year, officers of the National Arborist Association encouraged *Weeds and Turf* to look into the accident record and statistics of the tree service industry and try to come up with some solutions to this expensive problem. NAA supplied us with accident records from 1958 to 1962 which were compiled by the Ohio State Industrial Commission. These accident records are very revealing.

A quick look at the itemized accident causes in these statistics shows that the majority of tree company accidents do not happen to workers doing the hazardous work for which the industry is famous.

Veteran climbers don't often get hung up in ropes. Specialized trimmer-lift workers don't fall from buckets. Line clearance men are cautious near energized wires; electrocution deaths are rare compared to the rash of accidents which occur while workers perform "safe" jobs on the ground.

The overwhelming number of

accidents result from careless use of tools, clumsy misfootings, strains from overexertion, and not watching what fellow workers are doing.

Watch 18-25 Age Group

Records show that men between 18 and 35 have most accidents; this is understandable because strenuous work requires young men. But the group 18 to 25 has 25% more accidents than the 26 to 35 group. What kinds of accidents are these men involved in?

Ohio's Industrial Commission statistics show men most often *fall from, slip on, pick up, or are hit by* things which cause *bruises, lacerations, fractures, sprains, and strains*. There are other less common injuries also.

What can tree companies do to try to cut down these small but numerous accidents? Although arborists must pay a high insurance premium for all of their employees under 25, it would not do to refuse young men jobs. They will someday learn to climb, cable, brace, and work from a trimmer lift; their training for these jobs must start early.

It appears though that companies train their men for specialized work, but neglect training for commonplace work.

Owners should not take for granted that a new employee knows how to lift a heavy log correctly, that he knows how to use a hand saw without injury, or can carry an axe or even a gouge without injuring himself or someone else.

An obvious need for industry-wide safety reorientation exists. Routine jobs cause more accidents. Men have to be taught, not just told, how to do simple jobs safely.

Six Points for Safety

We have in mind a 6-point program to help reduce accidents:

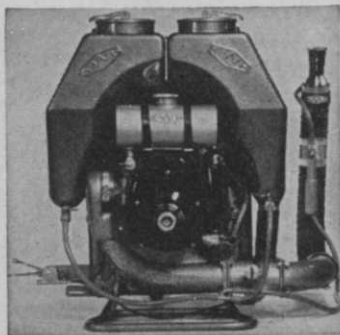
1. Screen New Employee Attitudes
2. Hold Safety Seminars
3. Teach by Example
4. Use Safety Posters in Trucks
5. Put Colored Adhesive Sticker Reminders on Misused "Safe" Tools
6. Start an Employee Safety "Court"

Careful screening at applicant interviews will show managers whether young men can handle themselves and tools responsibly. Close estimation of the applicant's common sense will reveal if he will perform the way

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he's taught. On-the-job show-offs usually end up as compensation statistics.

Safety seminars, held weekly or biweekly, have worked successfully in other industries, and can help arborists, too. Seminars should be started by top management to be most effective. Management must enlist and hold the active participation of employees to keep such a program effective.

Lectures don't work. Visual aids and demonstrations help men retain what they're taught. Seminars should combine technology with safety, e.g. "How to use lopping shears safely." One lesson on lopping shears, then a lecture on "Be Safe," will not come across.

Employees can also participate in demonstrations for the benefit of their co-workers. Graphs of past years' accidents compared with current performance will give men a competitive feeling.

Set Proper Example

On the job, field supervisors and foremen have to know and practice safe working habits. They must set examples for newer employees. They should reprimand workers using unsafe methods. Foremen who let minor infractions slip by, open the way for minor accidents—the kind that inevitably cause injury and increase insurance rates.

Tree companies usually work from widely spaced trucks, which may or may not be stored overnight at a main office. Safety posters on an office wall don't help the man in the field. However, posters installed in truck cabs (away from public view) remind men to and from work of the company's safety message. These posters have to be changed regularly so they don't become sour.

Many of the tree experts "safe," easy-to-use tools cause accidents: hand saws, pole saws, power saws, shears, axes, brush hooks, and even gouges. Small checklist labels stuck on exposed parts of these tools will attract attention and remind men to make certain the tool is operable, to see that there are no other

men near who could be harmed, or that the operator has no loose sleeves or pants cuffs which could catch in the tool, etc. Checklist instructions are a very helpful learning method.

Both truck posters and tool checklists are meant to supplement safety seminars and shouldn't be substituted for such meetings.

Our last suggestion is Employee Safety Courts. Several men (employees) sit on a "jury," and periodically hear reports of accidents from those involved. They determine the degree of guilt; whether there was negligence or whether the person involved did foresee hazard and take necessary precautions. For instance, a man who dropped a power saw onto his own toe and was injured because he forgot to wear his steel-toe shoes, would be found guilty of negligence; he would receive a designated number of points against him.

Discipline for reaching the maximum number of points is usually decided by management. This court system has worked in other industries and should work for arborists also.

If tree service accident statistics could be separated, the half tabulating those hazardous jobs arborists perform, we believe, would be more respectable. Supervisors have taught their specialists to recognize hazards and work safely with them. Although safety training for aerial workers cannot be neglected or reduced, groundmen have to be shown how to do their jobs properly, too.

Calchem Builds Pilot Plant

A pilot pesticide plant designed by the Ortho Div. of California Chemical Company to accelerate market and process development of its new pesticide products is under construction at Richmond, Calif. Completion is scheduled for January.

According to W. G. Toland, Manager, Research and Development, this intermediate facility between ordinary pilot plant operation and complete commercial installation, will provide a practical study of process techniques and equipment which can be used in the design of full-scale production facilities.