



Tree Care Operations

OSHA is in the early stages of developing a potential standard on Tree Care Operations. OSHA plans to convene a Small Business Advocacy Review (SBAR) Panel in Spring 2020 and is looking for small businesses and small local government entities to serve as small entity representatives (SERs).

Who might be covered by a new Tree Care Operations standard?

A new OSHA standard might cover workers who:

- Prune, repair, maintain, or remove trees, or
- Perform on-site support such as disposal of limbs or branches or the use of on-site equipment such as chainsaws and wood chippers.

This work is typically performed by: tree care companies, landscapers, municipal parks/recreation departments, or other businesses that maintain their own facilities.

Why is OSHA considering a new standard?

The fatality and injury rates for tree trimmers and pruners are extraordinarily high, much higher than the rate in most industries. Workers may be hurt or killed due to:

- Falls to lower levels (from trees, aerial lifts, boom trucks, and ladders)
- Being struck by falling objects (e.g., tree branches) or falling tools/equipment
- Exposure to electrical hazards
- Transportation incidents (e.g., being struck by cars in a work zone)
- Contact with equipment (e.g., chain saw, wood chipper, stump grinder, etc.).

There is no existing OSHA standard for Tree Care Operations. OSHA currently applies a patchwork of standards and the Occupational Safety and Health Act's General Duty Clause, 29 U.S.C. § 654(a)(1).

What might a new standard include?

Some topics for SERs to consider in helping OSHA draft a potential standard include:

- Written safety and health programs
- Job hazard analyses (JHAs)
- Job briefings
- Working alone
- Traffic control
- Emergency procedures and rescue
- First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)
- Fire prevention
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Environmental hazards

What will a Small Entity Representative do?

As a SER, you will participate in the SBAR Panel. OSHA will send each SER a packet of documents to review, and SERs will be asked to participate in a small-group teleconference to discuss concerns related to the information provided and how a new regulation might potentially affect their entity. The panel will report on what SERs have to say.

How can I serve as a Small Entity Representative?

Small businesses and small local government entities that would like to participate in the SBAR Panel as SERs should contact Bruce Lundegren at the Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, Bruce.Lundegren@SBA.gov, (202) 205-6144; or Robert Burt at OSHA, Burt.Robert@dol.gov, (202) 693-1952.