

Guidelines for Developing a Comprehensive Safety Policy for Tree Care Companies

A Written Comprehensive Safety Policy

A written safety policy is the beginning of any safety program. The policy statement sets the tone and indicates what the consequences will be. It does not have to be elaborate, but a written policy should reflect the following:

- The purpose of the safety program
- Who will be assigned safety responsibilities and what their responsibilities and accountability requirements will be

Communicating and Enforcing the Safety Policy

Having a policy doesn't mean that you've done enough to ensure safety. Make sure that your policy is understood and followed. To protect the company, you'll also want to document that the company has shared the Safety Policy and enforced it, in the event of an accident. While the policy doesn't have to be elaborate, it must be comprehensive. Follow these guidelines to make sure that the Safety Policy is implemented and applied:

- All employees should sign a document stating that they have read, understood, and will follow the company policy.
- The signed document should be retained in the employee's personnel file.
- New employees should sign prior to actual work.
- As the policy is updated, new sign-offs should be secured.
- Safety training should be provided for supervisors and employees.
- Safety bulletins and other communications should be distributed as information changes.
- Discipline should be consistently applied to all individuals in similar circumstances.
- Supervisors should be fully advised of the impact of their actions, given special caution concerning sole reliance on verbal instructions for safety directions, and urged to provide closer supervision to workers who are known to have violated safety rules or have personal problems that may interfere with their attention to their work.
- As requested or scheduled, supervisors should perform independent inspections and follow up inspections to ensure the work areas and employees are conforming to safety rules.

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