



# Tailgate Safety Training for Landscaping and Horticultural Services

Agricultural Safety Program, 590 Woody Hayes Drive, Columbus, OH 43210

## Preventing Falls from Trees

**Objective:** To prevent falls while trimming or pruning tree limbs.

### *How to Use This Module*

Falls can occur while trimming or pruning trees if safety precautions are not taken. For this module:

- Read the information on safety concerns, equipment, and procedures.
- Ask your supervisor and other workers to describe their experiences in trees.
- Discuss safety practices you will need to observe.
- Review the important points.
- Take the True/False quiz to check your learning.

For related information, see the Tailgate Safety Training modules *Proper Use of Ladders*, *Tree Pruning and Ladder Safety*, and *Overhead Electrical Hazards*.

## Background

You should always use a full-body harness and other safety equipment while working in trees. A full-body harness wraps around the waist, shoulders, and legs. It has a D-ring in the center of the back to attach a lanyard or other safety device. A full-body harness is the best type of safety system to use while you are trimming limbs. Always secure the harness before you start. Ask your employer if training and safety classes are provided for the proper use of harnesses and trimming equipment such as chain saws, hand cutting saws, and pruners. A safety belt can also be used while trimming limbs in trees. However, a safety belt will only keep you in position. It will not protect you if you should fall.

While trimming tree limbs, always be aware of electrical power lines. Most power lines are not insulated. Serious injury and possible electrocution can occur if you come into contact with power lines. Only experienced workers should trim trees near power lines. If possible, your employer should ask the power company to cut the power while you are trimming trees near power lines.

## Overhead Power Lines

- **Check for overhead power lines!**
- Stay at least 10 feet away from power lines.

## Safety Procedures to Prevent Falls

- Check trees and tree limbs for structural weakness before you climb or start trimming.
- Check all equipment for defects before you climb or start trimming.
- Be sure you are properly tied into the tree before you start trimming.
- Use a safety rope to raise and lower tools.
- Always pay attention to your footing. Check before you change your position.
- Always make sure that other workers are not below while you are trimming.
- If possible, have a co-worker on the ground act as a spotter.
- Do not work in trees if you are tired. Fatigue can lead to a fall or an accident.

## Safety Equipment

- Full-body safety harness
- Safety belt
- Lanyards
- Lifelines
- Cross-arm strap
- Earplugs or noise mufflers
- Safety glasses or goggles
- Gloves
- Hard hat
- Steel-toed boots

## Review These Important Points

- Always use the proper safety equipment while pruning trees to lessen the possibility of falling or having an accident.
- Only experienced workers should trim or prune tree limbs near power lines.
- Check all equipment for defects before you climb or start trimming.
- Never use a metal ladder to trim tree limbs near power lines.

## About These Modules

The author team for the training modules in the landscape and horticultural tailgate training series includes Dee Jepsen, Program Director, Agricultural Safety and Health, Ohio State University Extension; Michael Wonacott, Research Specialist, Vocational Education; Peter Ling, Greenhouse Specialist; and Thomas Bean, Agricultural Safety Specialist. Modules were developed with funding from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Grant Number 46E3-HT09.

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Answer Key: 1 = T, 2 = F, 3 = T, 4 = T, 5 = F.

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EXTENSION

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

### True or False?

1. A full-body harness is the best type of safety equipment to use while trimming trees. T F
2. A safety belt will protect you if you should fall. T F
3. You should perform a safety check of all equipment each time before you climb into a tree. T F
4. If you trim tree limbs near power lines, only use a wooden or fiberglass ladder. T F
5. The top step of a stepladder can be used if necessary. T F