

TREE CARE SAFETY

As with any profession that involves potential risk to workers, property owners or their property, the importance of safe practices on the job cannot be over-stated. Tree care is an especially hazardous business, resulting in high insurance rates and the need for safety training for all workers. When the Tree Expert Law was passed in Maryland, licensed tree experts were required to follow national regulatory guidelines for safety practices (ANSI Safety Requirements for Arboricultural Operations). This 54 page document covers general safety such as personal protection, traffic control, and emergency training, as well as correct procedures for electrical hazards, mobile equipment, portable hand and power tools, and all aspects of tree removal and pruning.

A licensed tree company should have obvious signs of safety practices in place, such as the use of personal protection equipment (hard hats, hearing and eye protection, and appropriate footwear), the use of leg protection when using a chain saw (chaps), and face protection when grinding brush or stumps. There are many other more technical safety requirements that workers should be trained to follow, that may not be as obvious to the property owner. These range from regulations governing such areas as truck stability and load, crane and aerial lift operation, climbing practices with rope and equipment requirements, and aerial rescue techniques.

In every step of a tree pruning or removal operation, workers should be trained to follow safe practices, and to constantly be checking for potential hazards. A Tree Expert License is required by law and is a first step to assuring that safety will be a first concern when work is being done on your property. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for enforcing the Tree Expert Law. More information can be found on their website at www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/programapps/newtreeexpert.asp