



The Tree Care Professional's Insurance Checklist

Excerpted from TCIA's Business Management Guide

How to Purchase Insurance

By Robert Rouse, TCIA VP of industry standards and credentialing

Insurance coverage is a necessary part of legitimate business overhead. What to buy, how much to buy and who to buy from are only a few of the factors to consider. We've highlighted some general items that tree care companies should consider when purchasing insurance, and included a checklist of items to review with your insurance carrier. Remember, your agent works for you, through fees and commissions paid based on your insurance premium. You are a valued client and your agent should be more than happy to discuss any of these items with you.

1. Does your insurance carrier have specialty products available to tree care companies?

Although many insurers will offer a varied number of insurance policy products to tree care professionals, some have more specialized coverage and industry knowledge than others. Some insurers may also be endorsed by one or more tree care industry associations. For example, TCIA endorses the ArborMAX insurance program because the ArborMAX team has extensive knowledge of our industry and a unique product, designed specifically for our industry. You should ask your agent if they have access to these specialized insurers.

Specialized insurers should offer specific coverage addressing the unique exposures of tree care operations, but also added services such as risk management, safety training programs and loss control services. For example, the TCIA Foundation (TCIAF) runs the loss control program for the ArborMAX insurance program. This allows TCIAF to place tree care industry experts at companies for on-site reviews. These experts make suggestions for improvements that can help the company avoid losses, resulting in lower premiums.

2. Is my agent knowledgeable about the tree care industry?

Ask your agent if they have special knowledge and background on the tree care industry. Do they insure other tree care companies in your area? Are they members of any tree care associations such as TCIA, and/or perhaps other local organizations? Are they partnered with insurers who specialize in the tree care industry?

Insurance professionals with specific knowledge of our industry can properly assess your insurance needs and exposures, and also point out potentially weak areas in your operations that may be having an adverse effect on insurance coverage and costs. By focusing on these areas the insurance professional can place your coverage with the most appropriate insurer while setting a plan in motion to control your insurance costs and keep them at their minimum, while maintaining adequate coverage.

This excerpt is intended as a starting point to help you begin a complete evaluation of your insurance needs in partnership with your insurance carrier. For a more detailed guide please see the Business Management Guide in the Member's -only section of tcia.org.

3. Checklist of items to review with your insurance agent:

General Liability

- Min. limit: \$1,000,000 per occurrence
- Occurrence Form
- Per project aggregate
- Arborist and landscapers professional services (errors & omissions) liability at policy limits, that include coverage for consulting
- Pesticide & herbicide applicator coverage
- Coverage for incidental operations (check for exclusions)

Commercial Automobile

- Same/concurrent limits as general liability
- Are special use vehicles properly described and insured to value?
- Are there restrictions on incidental operations? Example: snow plowing

Workers' Compensation

- Are all exemptions (for sole proprietors, partners and corporate officers) properly documented as either opted in or out?

Inland Marine

- Is all mobile equipment properly scheduled and current?
- Are major tools and equipment properly schedule and current?
- Are cranes exempted from "boom exclusions" for incidental operations?
Note: Crane rental contracts often require boom overload coverage in the small print.
- Is there adequate blanket coverage for miscellaneous tools and equipment?

Umbrella

- Are there adequate limits in force (\$1 million-\$5 million)?

Property

- Is all real and personal property insured to proper value?

TREE CARE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, INC.

Advancing tree care businesses since 1938

Published by Tree Care Industry Association, Inc. All Rights Reserved

136 Harvey Road, Suite 101, Londonderry, NH 03053 | Tel 603-314-5380 | Fax 603-314-5386 | tcia.org