

The Tree Worker

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Experience is a Great Teacher...

Accidents – those “unforeseen” events - don’t just happen, they have causes. For some reason, after an accident we can easily figure out what we should have done differently that would have helped us avoid the accident in the first place. So why can’t we figure what to do differently **before** the accident occurs to avoid all that pain and anguish?

Can’t be done, you might think. The reason we’re so good at using hindsight to see problems is that experience is such a powerful teacher. In order to use *foresight* to keep us out of harm’s way, we have to find something to replace experience as our teacher. What if we could tap into and download the

collective experience of hundreds of arborists? Kind of like in The Matrix, when Trinity learns to fly that helicopter in about five seconds?

We can’t quite do that. Here’s the next best thing, requiring a little more work. TCIA analyzed the accidents resulting from a little over six million man-hours of tree work.

To the right we list fourteen accident contributing factors that emerged at the top of our list. Here’s what you can do with it. Use your crews’ own experiences, accidents you’ve heard of, training programs, etc. to address each one of these factors. With this knowledge, do something proactive to avoid accidents.

ACCIDENT CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Cut lifeline
- Equipment failure
- Equipment misuse
- Failure to detect/assess hazard
- Failure to provide/acknowledge warning
- Failure to use PPE
- Minimum separation distance violation
- Misjudged force
- One-handed chain saw use
- Slippery conditions
- Tree failure
- Trip hazard
- Unauthorized employee in drop zone
- Unsecured

...but can you afford the lesson?

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