

# **Title: *Ergonomic Awareness and Safety for the Tree Care Worker***

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## **Objective:**

To educate that arborist on ergonomic strategies of injury prevention.

## **Problems:**

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) account for the largest percentage of work-related injuries and disabilities in the U.S. Ergonomics improves the interaction of the worker with his environment to decrease the risk of MSDs. Ergonomics for the arborist trades, requiring strength, agility, and stamina in a variety of industrial sectors needs to be addressed

## **Outline:**

### **Introduction to ergonomics related to the arborist trades**

1. Define ergonomics and describe why it is important to the tree care industry.
2. Define work related musculoskeletal disorders and describe common MSDs seen in the arborist trades.

### **Ergonomic Safety and Prevention**

1. Posture and body mechanics
2. Work positioning
3. Tool use and selection
4. Job task rotation
5. Proper bending technique

## **Facts about work-related musculoskeletal disorders**

### **According to the Council on Disability Awareness, in 2010:**

- \* MSDs were the leading cause of new disability claims and the most frequent diagnoses for new Social Security disability claims.
- \* MSDs were the cause of 27.5% of new and 30.1% of existing long-term disability claims.

### **According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2010:**

- \* MSDs accounted for 29% of all workplace injuries and illnesses requiring time away from work. Fifty percent of these cases were due to a low back injury.
- \* More than 50% of workers report that their work is affected for more than 30 days per year due to low back pain.

## **Impact of work-related MSDs to the arborist industry**

- \* Loss of production
- \* Costs to employer and employee
- \* Worker's loss of ability to return to work in prior capacity
- \* Loss of employee moral and decreased safety
- \* An owner/operator tree care company can be finically ruined by a single MSD.

## **Benefits of Ergonomic Education**

- \* Reduced Workmen's Compensation expenses
- \* Improved work place safety
- \* Improved productivity
- \* A happy and healthier work environment

## **Ergonomic Safety Standards**

- \* There are currently no ergonomic regulations specific to the tree care industry.
- \* The tree care industry has been identified by OSHA as having one of the highest injury and illness rates compared to other trades.
- \* Ergonomic standards are enforceable under the OSHA General Duty Clause, and therefore subject to applicable fines.

## **Applicable Standards**

- \* The Z133 has incorporated ergonomic awareness into the latest revision slated for release in 2012.
- \* The current Z133 does not possess a template for addressing ergonomic risk factors within industry sectors or subgroups of the committee.
- \* The European standardization body CE incorporates ergonomic consideration when it comes to equipment and operator task design.

## **Benefits of ergonomic education for the Arborist**

- ★ Improve ergonomic safety to decrease MSDs in the arborist trades