



# FROM THE ISAO SAFETY COMMITTEE: SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS



Slips, trips, and falls are among our most common incident type in the industry. However, there are steps that arborists can take to mitigate the dangers including proper training, work site protocols, and PPE.

DESCRIBE THE HAZARD

Arborists are often exposed to tight work spaces, unstable terrain (wet, muddy, and snowy conditions), and an abundance of targets and obstacles with crew members moving about the worksite carrying debris, equipment, rope and gear.

Although it may seem clear, let's quickly review the differences between slips, trips and falls. Slips occur when there is a loss of traction between our footwear and the walking surface. Trips happen when we encounter an unexpected obstacle or uneven surface. Falls result from a sudden loss of balance or support (for arborists, this could be from a height, but it could also be due to a trip or slip).

## DISCUSS CONTROL MEASURES

- ◆ Properly fitting work boots will ensure you have sufficient tread to enhance grip and help prevent slips, trips and falls. In addition, this will also help protect against cold, frostbite and the elements. As well, proper work boots help avoid ankle and back issues (with a minimum ankle height of 8" recommended). The use of proper insoles or orthopedic inserts can help you prevent long-term hip, knee and back issues.
- ◆ Removing or highlighting obstacle hazards throughout the work site will help prevent trips. This can include

site planning to create travel paths, clearing areas of debris (e.g. chipping and removing), and proper rope management.

- ◆ Arborists should receive proper training in working at heights.
- ◆ Arborists are often working aloft, so the proper use of fall protection equipment and safety harnesses is critical.
- ◆ Equipment and gear (including ropes and harnesses) should be regularly inspected to ensure it's in good condition and free from defects.
- ◆ Chainsaw PPE including safety glasses, pants/chaps and gloves, should also be worn (slipping, tripping, or falling during chainsaw operation creates additional hazards)

## DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE

- ◆ Assess the work site and discuss potential slip, trip and fall hazards, as well as control measures and mitigation techniques.
- ◆ Ensure you are using proper PPE including proper work boots, fall protection, and chainsaw protection
- ◆ Engage your crew in reporting hazards, incidents and near-misses to help address problems proactively
- ◆ Ensure your crew has received proper training in working at heights
- ◆ Review safety policies including your emergency response plan

The #1 priority of any arborist is to make it home every night! Making this industry safer than ever is a goal worth striving for, and we can all do our part by considering and mitigating these hazards.

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