

Talking Points: Tree Care Industry Seeks Workplace Safety Standard

- **Tree care is among the most dangerous professions:** Our workers face fatality rates **30 times the national average**, with at least 56 serious or fatal accidents in the last year alone.
- **Patchwork rules aren't working:** OSHA currently applies standards meant for other industries whose operations differ significantly from ours. This patchwork leaves hazards unaddressed, creates confusion, imposes unnecessary burdens and results in wasted resources and litigation.
- **We already have the right model:** The **ANSI Z133 safety standard**, developed through a consensus process since 1972, reflects the collective expertise of employers, employees, labor, and equipment manufacturers. OSHA should adopt this proven framework.
- **Our industry is deeply committed to safety:** TCIA created the **Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program**, training nearly 3,000 safety leaders nationwide. We've also built training programs and grants to ensure even small employers can implement strong safety systems.
- **Congress has long recognized this need:** Since 1998, bipartisan committees and Members from both parties have urged OSHA to adopt a tree care-specific standard. Letters of support have been sent in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2024, and 2025.
- **Progress has stalled:** Despite OSHA convening a SBREFA panel in 2020 that strongly recommended moving forward, the proposed rule has been delayed **nine times**—over four years of inaction—leaving workers at continued risk and employers without clear, consistent rules.
- **This is about saving lives and protecting small businesses:** Clear, industry-specific standards will reduce fatalities, improve training consistency, and give businesses clarity to comply without fear of arbitrary enforcement.
- **We need Congressional support:** OSHA has the tools, a consensus model (ANSI Z133), and bipartisan backing. What's missing is urgency. Congress can help ensure OSHA prioritizes and completes the rulemaking.

Tree Care Industry Seeks Workplace Safety Standard: Industry needs a clear OSHA standard tailored to tree care work

Who We Are

The Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) represents more than **1,400 businesses employing 150,000 professionals** nationwide. Our members maintain trees near homes, businesses, utilities, and public spaces helping to safeguard communities while performing one of the most dangerous professions in America.

Our Commitment to Safety

Tree care workers face fatality rates 30 times the national average, with at least 56 serious or fatal accidents recorded in the last year alone. TCIA created the Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program, training nearly 3,000 safety leaders nationwide.

The Arborist Safety Training Institute provides grants for worker training, ensuring safety resources reach even the smallest employers in our industry.

The Problem

Despite widespread recognition of hazards, OSHA currently regulates tree care through a patchwork of standards designed for other industries whose operations differ significantly from ours. This inconsistent approach leaves gaps in safety, creates confusion, imposes unnecessary burdens, wastes resources, and exposes employers to litigation.

The Solution

Adopt a tree care-specific OSHA standard based on the ANSI Z133 consensus standard, first established in 1972.

Provide clarity for small businesses, inspectors, and workers by addressing hazards unique to tree care operations.

Reduce fatalities, improve compliance, and create safer job sites across the country.

Bipartisan Support, Delayed Action

For more than 20 years, Congress, on a bipartisan basis, has urged OSHA to create a tree care-specific standard. In 2020, OSHA's SBREFA panel strongly recommended moving forward, yet the proposed rule has been delayed nine times, stalling for over four years.

The Legislative Opportunity

Congress can help ensure OSHA completes this rulemaking. With the ANSI Z133 standard and clear SBREFA recommendations, OSHA has the tools needed to finalize a rule that protects workers and provides regulatory clarity for the industry.

Our Ask:

We urge Congress to encourage OSHA to promptly issue a proposed rule establishing a clear, tree care-specific workplace safety standard based on the ANSI Z133 consensus model.

This standard will reduce fatalities, improve compliance, replace OSHA's patchwork of ill-fitting rules with one clear standard, and ensure the safety of the 150,000 professionals who protect America's communities every day.