Hearing Conservation – Landscaping Fatality File



Fatal Incident Linked to Inadequate Hearing Protection in Landscaping

On September 3, 2023, a fatal incident occurred at a commercial landscaping site in Dallas, Texas, involving a 49-year-old worker, John Harris. Harris, who had been operating a high-decibel leaf blower without adequate hearing protection, failed to hear an approaching heavy vehicle while working near a roadway. The loud equipment masked the sound of the vehicle, leading to Harris being struck and fatally injured.

The investigation revealed that Harris had not been provided with proper hearing protection equipment (HPE), nor had he received training on the importance of hearing conservation in noisy environments. The company’s failure to implement a hearing conservation program as required by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for workers exposed to high noise levels was a key factor in the incident.

In response, the landscaping company has instituted a comprehensive hearing conservation program, which includes mandatory use of hearing protection devices, regular noise exposure assessments, and training sessions on the risks associated with high-decibel environments. Additionally, they have introduced measures to improve communication and situational awareness for workers operating noisy equipment, particularly near roadways or other high-risk areas.