Pruning Safety Meeting Kit

TREE PRUNING PURPOSE, TECHNIQUES, AND SAFETY

The height, shape, and health of your trees can all be determined by the way you trim and prune them. Tree's health is directly affected by this process. A properly trimmed and pruned tree will thrive in its environment, while a poorly trimmed tree becomes more susceptible to disease, infestation, and fungi for the remainder of its life.

Reasons To Prune – Three Reasons

Health – Whereas pruning can be a response to danger, when performed proactively it can promote and improve a tree's health. Tree crown thinning stimulates and benefits a tree's health by allowing more air and sunlight to reach the inner leaves and branches.

Safety – Crossed branches that rub up against or bump each other in the wind should be trimmed back. This will avoid scaring, or one of them knocking the other to the ground, creating a serious hazard.

Aesthetics – The look of a tree can be greatly enhanced and influenced through regular pruning. Be cautious though, trying to create a topiary could influence you to trim too deep, seriously damaging the tree.

PRUNING SAW TECHNIQUE SAFETY PRACTICES FOR WORKERS

1. First Things

- Wear protective clothing to put a layer between you and the saw blade. This includes sturdy gloves (leather is best), long sleeves (denim is a good choice), full-length pants and eye protection.
- If you'll be working above your head (for example, with a pole pruner), wear a hard hat.
- Make sure the pruning saw blade is sharp (a dull tool can be more dangerous than a sharp one) and that it's firmly fastened to the handle.

2. How To Position Oneself

- Stand close to the branch you're cutting; you'll have better control of the saw if it's close to your body.
- Don't over-reach. Not only do you not have as much strength or control when your

arm and/or body is extended, you also run the risk of toppling over. This mostly applies if you're standing on a ladder or step stool but is also relevant even if you're firmly planted on the ground.
- Think about where the saw blade will go when you finish the pruning cut. It usually follows through from the cut so make sure all body parts are out of the way.

3. Where to Cut

- Pruning cuts should be made just outside the branch collar. This is the slightly swollen, ridged area where the branch you're cutting meets the trunk or larger branch it's attached to.
- Never cut a branch flush with the trunk. This will remove the branch collar and prevent the tree or shrub from healing.
- Don't make your cut in the middle of a branch or too far from the branch collar. If you do, the cut limb will die back to the branch collar, leaving an unsightly stub that's vulnerable to disease and pests.

4. Make the Cut

- Hold the branch firmly with your non-cutting hand. Just be sure it's not too close to where you're making the cut; the saw can jump out of the cut and slice your hand.
- To start the cut, place the saw teeth on top of the branch and slowly pull the blade toward you. This should make a shallow groove in the limb to "seat" the saw.
- When the blade is firmly seated, begin cutting by slowly and carefully moving the blade back and forth.
- Stay in control of the saw at all times. It's better to go slowly than to rush the cutting movements; going faster can make the saw jump out of the kerf (the groove made by the saw) or bind (get stuck, especially on the forward motion).
- Never force the saw; it can jump out of the kerf, bend or even snap.
- As you near the end of the cut, slow down – you don't want the saw suddenly breaking through and catching you by surprise. Cut slowly with the pull stroke until the cut is finished.
- Don't release the branch until the cut is finished. If you let go, the bark will probably tear as the limb breaks from the weight of the branch.
- For larger branches, use the 3-cut method to prevent torn bark.

GUIDELINES TO REDUCE RISK OF INJURIES

1. **Owner's Guide** – Before using pruning tools, the user should be fully trained on the equipment and should read and understand the operation and safety procedures in the operator's manual provided by the manufacturer.
2. **Inspection** – All tools and equipment should be inspected prior to using to make sure everything is functioning properly (e.g., blades sharpened, parts lubricated, etc.).
3. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Use the appropriate PPE, which may include well-fitting leather or other work-type gloves, long-sleeved shirt, long pants, sturdy shoes, and hearing protection/protective eyewear (e.g., when using hydraulic saws or loppers).
4. **Tool Choice** – Choose the tool that is right for the job that you need to complete.
5. **Weather** -Dress for weather conditions, including layers of clothing in the winter to prevent cold-weather related conditions like frostbite. On bright winter days, sunscreen should be applied to your face. Avoid using electric

pruning tools or equipment in rainy, wet, or dangerous weather conditions.

6. **Ladder Safety –** Follow recommendations on ladder placement, maximum load rating, proper ladder height, and maintenance. Choose the right type of ladder for the job (e.g., tripod ladder for orchard use).
7. **Repetitive Tasks** – Reduce the risk of muscle and joint injuries by taking short, frequent breaks when completing repetitive tasks and by doing stretches before, during, and after work.
8. **Power Line** – Be aware of power lines and never prune a tree or branches yourself if it is within 10 feet of power lines. Let a professional tree service prune or trim branches or trees within 10 feet of power lines.
9. **Slips and Falls** – Reduce the risk of slips and falls by using the 3 points of contact when using a ladder and not over-extending your reach by keeping your trunk within the side rails.
10. **Emergency Plan** – An emergency plan should be in place in the case of an incident. First aid kits should be easily accessible, and the crew leader should be trained in first aid.

FINAL WORD

Bending and lifting heavy true limbs can damage the back. These and other actions can cause injury specially when repeatedly use the same muscles. Sprains and strains are common and vibration from chainsaw can cause damage.