

Tree Planter Fact Sheet



WHAT DOES A TREE PLANTER DO?

Tree planters and other forestry workers perform physically demanding work. Some of their main duties are to:

- Clear brush.
- Climb over stumps, slash, and other obstacles.
- Carry and plant trees using manual tools.
- Feed machines manually.
- Prepare a site for planting.
- Use proper techniques for handling seedlings
- Use, clean, and maintain various equipment.
- Work with chemicals for plant growth, or for weed and pest control.
- Supervise other workers.

What are some health and safety issues for tree planters?

Tree planters face a variety of physical, biological, chemical, ergonomic and safety hazards. These include:

- Insect bites or stings.
- West Nile virus (mosquitoes).
- Lyme disease or rocky mountain spotted fever.
- Rabies.
- Allergic reaction to plants.
- Exposure to bird or rodent droppings:
 - Histoplasmosis
 - Psittacosis
 - Hantavirus
- Exposure to chemicals, including pesticides.
- Risk of pain or injury from working in awkward positions, performing repetitive tasks or lifting.
- Risk of tendonitis from repetitive work.
- Risk of injury from hitting a hidden rock with a shovel.
- Exposure to extreme temperatures or other extreme weather conditions (including lightning).
- UV radiation (risk of skin cancer from sunlight).
- Driving – vehicle safety hazards.
- Slips, trips and falls.
- Work near live electrical lines and equipment.
- Flammable products (e.g., fuel for the power equipment).

- Working with chainsaws and other tools/equipment.
- Stress.
- Working alone.
- Extended work days.
- Working in extreme hot and cold environments.

What are some preventive measures for tree planters?

- Learn safe lifting procedures.
- Select appropriate tools for the task.
- Keep tools and equipment in good working order.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the task.
- Wear appropriate footwear.
- Wear clothing appropriate to the hot and cold weather.
- Avoid awkward postures and repetitive manual tasks, or take frequent breaks.
- In the warmer months, cover up for protection from sun, heat and insects.
- Stay hydrated.
- In vehicles, always wear a seatbelt.
- Use insect repellents containing DEET or Icaridin to repel ticks and other insects such as mosquitos, horseflies, black flies, or gnats.
- Carry a first aid kit, as well as an epi-pen if you are allergic to bees, wasps, and hornet stings or have other allergies.

What are some good general safe work practices?

- Use safety procedures for:
 - Safe lifting
 - Selection, use, maintenance and storage of PPE
 - Working with pesticides and other substances
 - Using chainsaws, shovels and other tools or equipment
 - Working alone
 - Driving – vehicle inspection and distracted driving
 - Emergency preparedness
- Follow company safety rules.
- Learn about chemical safety, WHMIS and SDSs.
- Know how to report a hazard.
- Follow good housekeeping procedures.

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