

Struck by felled tree – Inspection #1082461

A **34 year old male** employee was fatally struck by a felled tree. On the day of the accident, the foreman (victim) and, a trimmer/climber began work to remove two trees at a utility water pump station. The trimmer climbed the first tree a 59-foot maple located uphill, and began topping the tree while the foreman used a rope to bring the cut limbs safely to the ground. After the tree was topped the trimmer tied a 120-foot long rope to the top of the maple tree and both men walked down the hill to locate an anchor tree to tie the rope to. The foreman made the decision to utilize an anchor tree located 78 feet away from the 59 foot tall maple tree. According to the employer's policy employees should be located at least 1½ tree lengths away from a tree being felled. Instead of cutting the tree into sections for removal, the supervisor made the decision to drop the tree in one cut. The decision not to cut the tree into sections may have been impacted by deteriorating weather conditions (rain) or an approaching break time. The foreman instructed the trimmer to notch and back cut the tree, while he was pulling the rope in the direction of the anchor tree, where he was standing. The tree fell, and struck the foreman in the head. The foreman (victim) suffered multiple fatal blunt force injuries to the head and body.

Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

Citation 1 Item 1

TCA 50-3-105(1)	Each employer did not furnish to each of its employees conditions of employment and a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious injury or harm to its employees. In that the employee was standing in the danger zone during the tree felling process of a 59-foot tall maple tree located on the grounds of the pumping station. ANSI Z133.1-2006 section 8.5.12 & 8.5.18
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Photo 1 of 1: This photo shows a view of the maple tree that struck the foreman. The “X” in the photo is where the employee was found by the authorities responding to the scene.