

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Cites Tree Service Company for Fatal Safety Breach

Redding—Cal/OSHA has cited Wright Tree Service of the West, Inc. for serious safety violations following an investigation into a fatal tree-trimming accident in Humboldt County near Weitchpec. The proposed penalties total \$31,750.

On December 30, 2015, Kenneth A. Williams, a foreman with Wright Tree Services of the West, died while trimming a bay laurel tree on Rock Ranch Road. Although Williams was using a flipline lanyard to secure himself to the tree, it had only one point of attachment when regulations require two. Williams was killed when he accidentally cut the lanyard with the chainsaw he was operating and fell 54 feet.

Cal/OSHA's investigation revealed the employer had failed to ensure that workers were using a second point of attachment to secure the worker when operating a chain saw in a tree. Also, workers' clothing, equipment and procedures failed to meet safety standards.

"Tree work involves many hazards, and employers must develop and implement safety procedures and train their employees to prevent accidents," said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. "Most accidents can be prevented."

Both citations in this case were classified as serious. Serious violations are cited when there is a realistic possibility that death or serious physical harm could result from the actual hazard created by the violation.

Failure to develop and implement appropriate safety procedures is one of the major causes of serious workplace injury and death in California. Accidents related to tree work can result in severe traumatic injuries and death. Twelve fatal accidents related to tree work have been reported to Cal/OSHA since May 2015.

Commonly reported accidents include falls, electrocutions, and those caused by falling objects. Most accidents can be prevented by recognizing and controlling hazards in advance as well as training employees on safe work practices and effective use of personal protective equipment. Cal/OSHA offers a fact sheet on [tree work safety](#).

Cal/OSHA, officially known as the Division of Occupational Safety and Health, is a division of DIR. Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#)

provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734). The California Workers' Information line at 866-924-9757 provides recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics. Complaints can also be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

Members of the press may contact Julia Bernstein or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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