

Investment in Training Improves Bottom Line For Utilities

A White Paper by ArborMaster®

The Most Dangerous Profession?

The landscaping and horticultural industry is one of the most dangerous in the country.* From 1991 to 2000, at least 587 tree workers were killed on the job. Injuries and fatalities can cost utility companies millions of dollars in lost work days, sky-high insurance premiums, and low worker morale.



Tree work is a team effort. Un-trained workers are dangerous to themselves and all team members. “You’re only as safe as your least trained worker,” says Dr. John Ball (“How Accidents Happen,” TCI Magazine, August 2003).

How ArborMaster® Helps—Lessons from Arizona Public Services



Since 1995, ArborMaster has been the leader in innovative safety, skill and productivity solutions for tree care and related green industries. ArborMaster specializes in consulting, evaluating and training with a focus on safety systems, field operational excellence and the bottom line. As a partner and mentor to thousands of arborists worldwide, they are the premier provider of in-house, customized programs and solutions as well as open enrollment courses. Company principals Ken Palmer and Rip Tompkins take an active role in promoting safety within national and international arborist associations.

A recent example shows how utility companies save money and improve safety with ArborMaster. Arizona Public Services (APS) went from approximately 1 accident per month to being accident free for one year – April 2004-April 2005 – following the initial training from ArborMaster (visit http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/safetyhealth/mod1_costs.html to estimate what accidents cost). In addition, their cost per tree worked fell from \$36 to \$25, their lowest cost since they began tracking this in 1997 (while outside contractors price rose from \$29 to \$55 in the same period). The number of trees worked increased as well.

APS’ one-year training investment with ArborMaster amounted to 1% of their in-house annual expenditures on tree work. With this modest investment, APS was able to reduce its in-house cost-per-tree by 30%. (Data and analysis by Mike Neal, Manager of Forestry and Special Programs, APS).



The Davey Tree Expert Company experienced an equally dramatic return-on-investment. After incorporating ArborMaster techniques in the Davey Advanced Arborist Training Program and putting some of their key foreman through this training program, Davey realized a 30% across the board increase in productivity.^ Davey, like many other commercial, private and municipal tree care organizations, profited greatly and took their business to the next level by employing the expertise of ArborMaster.

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* In 2003, OSHA’s Strategic Plan targeted 7 industries with the highest injury/illness rates. These industries are: Landscape and Horticultural; Oil and Gas Drilling; Primary Metals and Steel, Ship and Boat Building & Repair; Public Warehousing and Storage; Concrete and Concrete Products; Preserved Fruits and Vegetables.

^ ‘Old School vs. New School: The Benefits of Quality Training,’ Tim Jackson, TCI Magazine, July 2002.