

# Basic safety checklists for the amenity tree and gardening services industry

Work in the amenity tree and gardening services industry involves risks that need to be managed carefully. Severe or fatal injuries are not uncommon. Please use these checklists to inspect your workplace so that you can identify and manage risks. Anything that you have ticked 'No' should be fixed so far as is reasonably practicable.

These checklists provide a general outline of some hazards and risks to consider in this industry, but every workplace and worksite is different and may have additional hazards and risks. These checklists should therefore be used in conjunction with other guidance and technical advice.

General safety checklist for tree and gardening services	Yes	No	N/A
A visual tree assessment has been conducted to assess the condition of the tree and determine the appropriate equipment and safest method to remove.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A hazard identification and risk assessment of the site has been conducted to identify known/common* hazards and risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriate control measures (such as tree felling exclusion areas) address any identified on-site risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers are provided with site specific information relating to management control, workplace amenities, hazards, potential risks, and the control measures that are in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All workers have received information and instruction and understand their roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers are trained and/or licensed and competent to perform all the tasks required of them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers are fit for work e.g. not fatigued or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal protective equipment (PPE) is used such as eye protection, hearing protection, safety helmets, safety boots, gloves, hi-vis clothing, cut resistant pants, etc. PPE should be suitable for specialised tasks such as machine operations or climbing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers are provided with OHS information about reporting incidents, injuries, or near misses, as well the location of first aid kits and fire extinguishers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate sun protection measures/policies are in place, e.g. hats, sunscreen, long-sleeve shirts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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<b>Systems of work checklist for tree and gardening services</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
A safe system of work has been developed to limit the risks to the health and safety of workers undertaking tree felling activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where there are exclusion or drop zones, they are identified and made clearly visible (with markers, flags, cones, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clean, smoke-free areas clear of flammable vegetation are designated for tools and refueling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A system is in place to ensure no unauthorised people or animals can enter the work area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For work conducted near live overhead power lines, a risk assessment has been carried out and control measures have been put in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worksite communication methods, such as handheld radios, are agreed before the start of work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency procedures are in place, including aerial rescue procedures, and all workers understand site emergency procedures. The site is accessible to emergency vehicles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Chainsaw safety checklist</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
The operator has been briefed on the task and undertaken a visual inspection of the tree.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The operator is trained and competent to use a chainsaw.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The chosen chainsaw is appropriate for the job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A chainsaw inspection has been undertaken and the pre-start check indicates that bar, chain, and sprockets are in good condition, bar oil is flowing, the chain brake is working, and the chain is sharp.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The operator agrees not to cut anything above shoulder height with the chainsaw.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The chainsaw is carried with the engine off, muffler away from the operator's body, and the saw blade pointing to the rear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After refueling, the chainsaw is moved away from the fuel source before starting the engine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The chainsaw is operated with two hands, unless it is designed for one hand use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a second person within calling distance. Never operate a chainsaw alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Wood chipper safety checklist	Yes	No	N/A
Two workers will be operating the chipper at all times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The operators have been briefed on the task and understand their roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The operators are trained and competent to use a wood chipper.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A wood chipper inspection has been undertaken and the pre-start check indicates that: 1) emergency stops are working and correct for the size of machine; 2) chipper blades do not have cracks or chips; 3) securing bolts on the top hatch are the correct grade and torque; 4) a drop down table is fitted at the rear; 5) a bump bar is fitted and working, and; 6) engine, hot parts, and nip points are working.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The chipper is never left unattended while operating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The chipper is fed off the centre line from the kerb side (where practical).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operators do not wear loose clothing, jewellery, rings, or watches and are correctly fitted with PPE, including eye protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Material for chipping is checked for entanglements before it is fed into the chipper.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A wooden push stick is available to push in smaller branches to prevent reaching in to the infeed chute.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Stump grinder safety checklist	Yes	No	N/A
The stump grinder is adequately maintained and inspected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or the recommendations of a competent person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A pre-start safety check is conducted to ensure guards, safety cut-offs, or e-stops are functioning correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debris is removed from the immediate area to ensure pedestrian and public safety around the work zone. Use shields and barriers if necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The stump grinder is stopped, moved away from the work area, and the cutting wheel is not moving when excess debris is cleared away from the grinding area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operators do not wear loose clothing, jewellery, rings, or watches and are correctly fitted with PPE, including eye protection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The location of underground services is identified and control measures put in place, if needed, prior to commencing work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Tree climbing safety checklist	Yes	No	N/A
The tree is inspected to determine suitability for climbing, extra precautions needed, or special techniques required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The weather conditions are assessed to determine if it is safe to climb.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A minimum of two persons should be present; one climber and one ground person who is also able to climb (in the event of the first climber being injured and unable to descend the tree). Communication methods between the two workers are determined prior to any works.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All climbing equipment is checked for safety and is in good condition prior to use and throughout the day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ropes used for lowering branches have a contrasting colour to the vegetation to make them easily visible. Excess rope is secured in a rope bag or by a retractable system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A figure eight knot or eye splice is tied to the end of the climbing rope to prevent the rope from accidentally running through the Prusik knot.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All points of attachment are correctly set and visually inspected before placing weight on them (i.e. knots correctly tied, checked, carabiners closed and locked). A minimum of two points of attachment should be maintained when cutting a branch or limb.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anchor points are healthy, sound, and suitably strong. They are positioned in such way that a slip or fall would swing the worker away from power lines or other potential hazards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No more than one climber is working in a tree (in most situations this is the safest method to perform the task).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Elevating Work Platform (EWP) safety checklist for tree and gardening services*	Yes	No	N/A
The correct EWP is selected for the task. Consider height and reach, insulation requirements (if working near overhead power lines), ground conditions, weather conditions, location of overhead services and the type of work to be done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A hazard identification and risk assessment specific to the EWP being operated is undertaken and control measures (i.e. safe systems of work) are put in place. Traffic hazards should be included.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The EWP is adequately maintained and inspected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or the recommendations of a competent person. Information about its operation and maintenance are readily accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-start safety checks are conducted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions prior to commencing work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The EWP emergency lowering and bucket descent device are operational and both operators and safety observers know how they are activated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operators using a EWP at or over 11 metres hold a current and valid high risk work licence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EWP operators (and anyone in the basket) have a fall arrest harness with a shock absorber that is anchored correctly, in date, in good condition, and fits correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EWP operators comply with safety basics and manufacturer instructions such as lowering a boom for travelling and not driving the EWP with baskets elevated or over changes in ground level. The latter could cause the EWP to tip.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overhead power lines have been identified and work within 'no go zones' is conducted in accordance with EnergySafe Victoria (ESV) guidelines, including requiring ESV training for certified spotters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A trained safety observer is in place for works not requiring certified electrical spotters (whenever reasonably practicable).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\*This checklist is to be used in conjunction with further comprehensive guidance on the safe operation and use of plant and EWPs on WorkSafe Victoria's web site.

# Basic safety checklists for the amenity tree and gardening services industry

In addition to these checklists, employers should reference the following WorkSafe Victoria guidance:

1. Working safely with trees – guidance update and addition (in progress)
2. [Plant compliance code and guidance](#)
3. Guidance on [elevating work platforms \(EWPs\)](#)
4. [Plant hazard checklist](#)
5. [No go zones for overhead electrical power lines](#)
6. [A guide to falls prevention](#)
7. [Workplace amenities and work environment compliance code](#)
8. [Sun protection](#)
9. [Hazardous substances compliance code and guidance](#)
10. [Hazardous manual handling compliance code and guidance](#)

This guidance has been developed using:

[Checklists for tree loppers and gardening services](#), WorkSafe WA.

[Guide to managing risks of tree trimming and removal work](#), Safe Work Australia.

[Tree work self-assessment checklist](#), Safework NSW.

*These Checklists are intended for general use only and may not be applicable in every circumstance. You should always check any applicable legislation and make your own judgement about what action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with the law. Accordingly, WorkSafe Victoria cannot be held responsible and extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information for any particular purpose; or actions taken by third parties as a result of information contained in the Checklists.*

*For information about WorkSafe in your own language, call TIS National on 13 14 50*