

## Worksite Safety ...

# Talk About It!

Article contributed  
by ArborMaster

The best way to begin a safe and productive day at the jobsite is to start with a thorough job briefing. This involves all members of the team discussing the various aspects of the job and deciding which team members will play which roles. The best way to ensure that the jobsite stays safe and productive is to continue to communicate throughout the day. Put simply, good communication is key to keeping the jobsite safe, avoiding accidents and making the job profitable. Tree work is a team effort; one person can't do the job alone.

A good model for a job briefing is to use the acronym **HOPE**. This should be done with the whole crew and should involve a walk around the site identifying **H**azards (things that can hurt us) and **O**bstacles (things that we can hurt or damage) on the jobsite. Can the hazards be worked around? Do obstacles need to be moved or protected? Next, a **P**lan needs to be created, discussing how the work will flow and who will perform which tasks. Finally, what **E**quipment will be needed to carry out the plan? Make sure everyone has the proper PPE (personal protective equipment) and that a fully stocked first-aid kit is available. It is also important to make sure that there is cell phone or two-way

radio coverage at the jobsite in case of an emergency. If there is not coverage, a plan needs to be made on how best to contact emergency services if they are needed. Make sure everyone knows the physical address of the jobsite in case they need to make the call. Also remember — when unforeseen things come up, it is best to regroup and refine the plan.

Once the work has begun, it is important to keep the lines of communication open and active. A simple voice command/response communication system can be very effective. This involves a dialogue





between workers and an understanding that no one assumes their command has been heard — they make sure of it. An example would be a climber making a command such as “stand clear” before cutting a piece of wood or before using an unsecured piece of equipment. The climber then waits for the “all clear” or “go ahead” response from the ground before proceeding. Once given this response the climber technically owns the “drop zone” area beneath him/her.

Using this running dialogue between ground workers and aerial workers will ensure that one hand always knows what the other is doing and vice versa. Because tree work sites are often noisy, it may be hard to hear voice commands. Hand signals can be an effective form of communication as long as they are well discussed in advance and well understood by the various team members.

An efficient tree crew that works like a team, where everyone knows their roles, will be a more productive crew. A crew that communicates well together will be a safer crew and avoid costly and demoralizing accidents. Safety and productivity can walk hand in hand. Plan your work and work your plan.

**Please work safely!**

Since 1995, [ArborMaster](#) has been the leader in innovative safety, skill and productivity training and solutions for people and organizations who work with, in and around trees.

ArborMaster specializes in training, evaluation and consultation with a focus on safety systems, field operational excellence and the bottom line. Training is delivered through private in-house programs and regional open enrollment courses.

