

1 THE BENEFITS OF
GROUP TRAINING

An ANLA member explains how his nursery employees benefit from group training when he's trying to get a safety message across.

3 ERGONOMICS: TIPS TO
KEEP IN MIND

Sprains and strains are common in the landscape industry. Ensure that your employees understand these ergonomically safe tips from TechneTrain, Inc.

4 BRRR! COLD WEATHER
IS ON ITS WAY

Are your workers prepared for colder weather? Hortica Insurance offers tips to dress properly, along with ways to prevent hypothermia, frostnip and frostbite.

THE ONE-STOP SOURCE FOR GREEN INDUSTRY SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Maximize Your Next Safety Message With Group Training

If you're looking to make the most of your time and that of your employees, consider group training when you need to get a safety message across (or any other type of message pertinent to your business). At Belmont Nursery, we hold monthly meetings to discuss a predetermined topic. Past safety topics include sun safety and proper hydration, lifting techniques when moving plants, and tips on driving safety. Group training is not only effective, but it also builds a sense of camaraderie. Here are some ideas to think about when you plan a group training session.

Choose your time, topic and trainer

- Select a day and time when your entire group can meet. A 30-minute time limit is ideal. That timeframe should include the instructional period and a Q&A session.
- Plan a calendar of topics ahead of time. Ask for feedback and/or suggestions for topics from your employees. Schedule a planning session to give your workers time to brainstorm on what they would like to learn and what topics they are interested in.
- Line up your trainers. They can be employees or managers from your company or local professionals/experts.
- Have a translator available as needed.



by Jon Reelhorn, Owner
Belmont Nursery, Fresno, Calif.

Before the meeting starts

- Mention to employees how to dress before a training session. Your employees should be safe and comfortable in their attire.
- Try group stretching in the morning. Have a boom box available since music can liven up any atmosphere. Loosening up the muscles and stretching are good ways to clear an employee's mind before a training session.
- Arrive 15 to 30 minutes early to set up music, chairs, visual aids, games, etc.

Starting the meeting

- Start promptly. Introduce your trainer and include his or her background, current position, and responsibilities.
- Ask a volunteer to read your company's mission statement.
- Introduce the topic, and mention the training objectives for the meeting.
- If you plan to talk about changing a work procedure, discuss the way it is currently being

continued on page 2

Group Training - continued from page 1

done. What works and what doesn't? Involve the group by asking questions, and encourage critical thinking on how to do things better.

Creative ways to get your message across

- Develop sessions around something the group can do. If your talk is about proper lifting techniques, give tips while the group is learning to plant 15-gallon trees.
- Take action pictures of people working safely. Then post those photos for everyone to see.
- Change the meeting room. Move your training sessions around your business—indoors and out—for variety. People are apt to pay more attention if their surroundings aren't always the same.
- Award certificates of achievement. You can give certificates for attendance, training, leadership or spirit.

- Develop a mock competition. Create a 10-minute challenge that will emphasize the safety point you are trying to make.
- Consider a safety award. If someone notices unsafe conditions or practices in your business, award that person with a small prize.

Time to recap and wrap up

- Recap highpoints of your session. Conduct a quick review of these highpoints. Keep it simple and short. Just include the most important 3-5 points.
- Wrap up. Finish your meeting on a positive note (and on time). Acknowledge and thank your trainer (with applause). Also thank your participants. Restate your mission or goals as a business.
- Determine whether you need to translate any written information that is part of the presentation into Spanish.
- Introduce next month's topic to encourage thought and preparation. Finally, let your team know that they are better and safer than they were 30 minutes ago.

You can reach Jon Reelhorn, an ANLA member, at 559-255-6645.

CHECKLIST

- Plan a calendar of topics ahead of time.
- Arrive early to set up the room.
- Start promptly, and introduce your trainer.
- Take action pictures of people working safely.
- Award certificates of achievement.
- Have a translator available if needed.
- Recap the highpoints of your session.
- Thank your trainer and your participants.
- Introduce next month's topic.
- Let your team know that they are safer than they were 30 minutes ago.

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OSHA Alliance Targets Young Workers

The green industry employs a number of young adults who may not be as familiar with safety issues. In an effort to train such workers, OSHA has just teamed up with SkillsUSA, a Kansas City, MO-based organization to further its efforts to protect young workers. SkillsUSA serves more than 279,000 high school and college students and professional members enrolled in training programs in technical, skilled and service occupations.

Under the terms of the alliance, OSHA and SkillsUSA will provide expertise to career and technical educators, employers and

young workers by developing information on how to recognize and prevent workplace hazards.

According to 1999 data, 84,000 young workers visited hospital emergency rooms due to workplace injuries, with about 65 percent of those individuals missing at least one day of work. And according to OSHA, 2.2 million students between the ages of 14 and 18 work an average of 17 hours per week in the United States.

For more information on teen workers, visit www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html.

Ergonomics for Hort/Landscape Services



by Shannon DeCamp
TechneTrain, Inc.

The Landscape and Horticultural Services industry has been targeted by OSHA as one of seven industries with high injury and illness rates for focused enforcement activity, with OSHA's goal being to reduce the rates of workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses in these industries. One area identified by OSHA as a risk for the Nursery and Landscape industry are "sprain and strain" injuries that can result from the manual handling of landscaping tools and materials. Here are some ergonomic principles to keep in mind.

Lifting

There are multiple hazards associated with lifting. Some loads are too heavy to lift even under ideal lifting conditions. Factors that increase the risk of injury include reaching to access and lift a load, frequent repetition of lifting motion, lifting for long periods of time, and twisting and bending of the torso. Frequent repetition or lifting for long periods of time leads to muscle fatigue, ultimately resulting in poor lifting technique. Twisting and bending pull the back out of its normal alignment and can pinch or alter the discs, making them more susceptible to bulging, rupture, overexertion and strain. Lifting techniques to prevent injury include:

- Use approved lifting devices whenever feasibly possible.
- Keep the load directly in front of you and close to the body.
- Avoid any or all twisting of the torso, and minimize bending by keeping the load between shoulder and thigh height.
- Avoid lifting any excessively heavy loads. For most people, anything over 50 to 60 pounds is too heavy. If lifting

conditions are less than ideal (i.e. twisting or bending, frequent repetition, etc. is required), the maximum load that is considered "too heavy" should be reduced.

Vibration

Repeated use of vibratory equipment, including hand tools and lawnmowers, can damage blood vessels and reduce

"Twisting and bending pull the back out of its normal alignment and can pinch or alter the discs, making them more susceptible to bulging, rupture, overexertion and strain."

nutrient flow to the hand. Loss of circulation can lead to tissue and nerve damage, along with hypersensitivity to cold. Some prevention techniques include:

- Use handle wrappings or sleeves that suppress vibration, as well as vibration-dampening gloves.
- Use vibration isolation between tool and attachment to isolate or minimize vibration whenever possible.
- Avoid extended use of vibratory machinery.

Repetitive Motion

Performing hand-intensive tasks with a bent wrist, either up and down or side to side, creates considerable stress on the tendons and their sheaths. Prolonged repetitive hand work, such as prolonged use of hand shears for trimming, can lead to tendonitis, tenosynovitis, and carpal tunnel syndrome.

- Keep the wrist as straight as possible while performing finger-intensive tasks.

- Use appropriately designed hand tools that enable the wrist to remain neutral.

- Use power tools to perform highly repetitive motions whenever feasibly possible.

- Provide tools with handles that are appropriately sized for the user.

- Redesign or alternate tasks, or alternate hands to perform tasks so that muscles are not used for prolonged periods.

Push/Pull Operations

Injury to the knees and ankles can occur when significant force must be exerted to push heavy loads, or push even moderate loads across uneven surfaces. An example is trees being transported on tree carts to planting holes. Some solutions include:

- Use machinery or push/pull aides whenever possible.
- Break down large loads into several loads, and/or use a buddy system.
- Be sure the travel path is free from debris.
- Wear shoes with good grips to avoid slips.

Shannon DeCamp is Client Services Manager for TechneTrain, Inc. This is only an overview of ergonomic safety. For more information, visit www.technetrainonline.com for a full line of training programs and reference manuals on OSHA compliance requirements for the landscape industry, or contact TechneTrain, Inc. at (800) 852-8314. Members may order products directly from ANLA at a discounted price.

Stay Warm When the Weather Turns Cold

by Andrew J. Mauschbaugh
Assistant Vice President, Loss Control
Hortica Insurance

When the temperature dips in the fall and winter months, many horticultural workers will still be working outdoors. Donning extra clothing will help keep workers warm, but what other measures can be taken? Here are some ideas to keep workers warm.

Know how to dress—and be prepared

- Layer clothing when working outside. Ideally, the bottom layer should be moisture-wicking clothing to keep wetness off of the skin. Or wear long underwear.
- Wear a hat. Fifty percent of the body's heat loss is through the head.
- Gloves are often worn year-round. Use a warmer pair in cold temperatures.
- Ditto for hearing protection. Along with earplugs, wear earmuffs that will keep ears warmer and add protection from cold winds.
- Insulated boots with knee-high ski socks will provide extra warmth for cold toes.
- Have an extra set of dry clothes available

at work to replace clothes that get wet.

- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of liquids (caffeine-free and non-alcoholic) throughout the day.
- Keep blankets, matches, a first-aid kit, and a flashlight handy.
- Work with a buddy. If working alone, make your schedule known to others.

Prevent hypothermia and frostbite

There are conditions that can result from exposure to the cold including hypothermia, frostbite and frostnip. Here are some details from the National Safety Council.

Hypothermia—Hypothermia can happen even when temperatures are above freezing. Mild hypothermia includes shivering, slurred speech, confusion and fumbling hands. A person might seem weak or tired.

With severe hypothermia, shivering has stopped, and muscles may be stiff and rigid. Pulse rate and breathing slow down, and unconsciousness can set in. If you suspect hypothermia, call 9-1-1. If working outdoors, shield the victim from inclement weather while keeping the head

and body covered. If shelter is nearby, stop further heat loss by bringing the victim into a warm place. Remove all wet clothing, dress in dry clothing, and/or bundle with dry blankets.

Do not place victim in hot water or massage victim. If person is conscious, give warm beverages (not alcohol or caffeine).

Frostbite and *Frostnip*—*Frostbite* is the freezing of skin and underlying tissue and happens only in below-freezing temperatures. The skin feels cold and firm and looks white or bluish. The person has no feeling and will say the affected area feels numb. Seek medical attention immediately, and get the victim to a warm place. Remove any constrictive clothing.

Frostnip is less serious. The skin is white or pale and remains pliable. First aid for frostnip consists of gently warming the affected area with bare hands or by blowing warm air on the area. After rewarming, the affected area may be red, tender, and slightly swollen.

For more seasonal safety information, contact Hortica at 800-851-7740
www.hortica-insurance.com

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