



TREE CARE INDUSTRY
Association
established 1938

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For immediate release

TCIA launches new certification to create culture of safety in every tree care company

The Tree Care Industry Association is proud to announce the launch of the industry's first safety certification program – The Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP).

“There is nothing more noble than the shared pursuit of the elimination of accidents and fatalities in the tree care industry,” noted TCIA President and CEO, Cynthia Mills, CAE. “The tree care industry has participated in standards development for years – both voluntary and through government regulation – to identify hazards and improve safety. TCIA, and previously National Arborist Association, worked to develop tools to help companies with safety training. We held seminars, workshops, conferences and committee meetings to share knowledge about safety developments and encourage arborists to embrace best practices,” she explained. “What we haven't done is make a significant difference in the overall industry's accident rates. They're unacceptably high. This collective experience of the tree care industry reduces our credibility with the outside world and profoundly impacts insurance rates and other costs of doing business.”

When TCIA announced its intent to Transform the Industry over a decade, it committed to five outcomes that include: “Safety will have measurably improved. Accident rates will have lowered.” Part of the Transformation of the Industry was the launch of an Accreditation program to assist companies to implement best business practices and to give consumers a way to identify qualified tree care companies.

“Our experiences in the field during the implementation of this program clearly pointed us to the solution for how to accomplish this second and noble outcome – to save lives – by establishing a program that will train companies on how to establish a safety culture,” said Robert Rouse, TCIA's director of Accreditation.

“The industry will not improve its record unless something changes,” said Peter Gerstenberger, TCIA's senior advisor for safety, standards and compliance. “Providing tools is not enough. Small companies that do not have the resources to hire a person specifically devoted to safety must have an alternative that will provide this leadership for their team. The CTSP program has been developed with the majority of TCIA member companies' needs in mind.”

Providing direction on the use of tools, training safety leaders in every company, developing a coaching style within the employee team and establishing a culture of safety can lower companies' experiences of accidents. This requires management's commitment and buy-in to the investment in a safety culture.

The CTSP program's concept will be officially presented at the TCIA Winter Management Conference in February. A full program of assessment, workshops and examinations will be phased into place throughout 2006.

“Every tree care company should have CTSPs on their team and commit to establishing a safety culture,” stressed Mills. “We know companies are ready to Transform the Industry by partnering with TCIA to save lives so everyone goes home every night.”

TCIA is an international trade association that develops safety and educational programs, standards of tree care practices, and management information for tree care firms throughout the world. TCIA also offers an Accreditation program, a seal of approval that helps discerning consumers identify trustworthy companies.