

Landscaping Safety Manual



A Guide For Our Employees

Last updated on Jan 2025

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Purpose and Scope
 3. OSHA Standards Overview
 4. General Safety Guidelines
 5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 6. Tool and Equipment Safety
 7. Hazard Communication (Chemicals, Fertilizers, and Pesticides)
 8. Ergonomics and Lifting Safety
 9. Heat Stress and Sun Exposure
 10. Insect, Animal, and Plant Hazards
 11. Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention
 12. Driving and Vehicle Safety
 13. Emergency Procedures
 14. Incident Reporting and Recordkeeping
 15. Training and Compliance
-

1. Introduction

Landscaping presents unique challenges and potential hazards that require employees and employers alike to stay vigilant about safety. This **Landscaping Safety Manual** is designed to provide clear guidelines and best practices to protect workers from injury and illness on the job. By following the precautions outlined in this manual—developed in accordance with **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** standards—your organization can create a safer, more productive work environment.

Key Objectives:

- **Promote Safety Awareness:** Increase awareness about common landscaping hazards and the importance of following safety protocols.
- **Minimize Injuries and Illnesses:** Provide practical guidance on using the right personal protective equipment (PPE), operating tools and machinery safely, and avoiding hazards such as heat stress, insect bites, and chemical exposure.
- **Ensure Regulatory Compliance:** Outline the steps and standards required to meet or exceed OSHA regulations for landscaping work.
- **Foster a Safety Culture:** Encourage all employees—management, supervisors, and field staff—to be proactive in identifying and mitigating risks.

Who Should Use This Manual:

- **Employees** working in landscaping, groundskeeping, and any related outdoor services.
- **Supervisors** responsible for overseeing field crews and ensuring compliance.
- **Management** teams tasked with establishing safety policies, procedures, and training programs.

By taking the time to understand and apply the information presented here, you help maintain a secure and efficient worksite. In the pages that follow, each section provides key insights, recommendations, and procedures to help you and your team stay safe while delivering high-quality landscaping services.

2. Purpose and Scope

2.1 Purpose

The primary purpose of this **Landscaping Safety Manual** is to establish a comprehensive set of guidelines and best practices designed to:

- **Prevent Workplace Incidents:** Minimize the risks of injuries, illnesses, and fatalities through proactive measures.
- **Maintain Compliance:** Ensure that all landscaping activities comply with applicable OSHA standards and local regulations.
- **Promote a Culture of Safety:** Foster an environment where everyone—management, supervisors, and employees—recognizes hazards and works together to mitigate them.
- **Protect the Workforce and Public:** Enhance the safety of not only employees but also the general public and clients who may be near worksites.

2.2 Scope

This manual applies to all **landscaping and groundskeeping** operations conducted by the company, including (but not limited to):

- **Routine Maintenance:** Mowing, edging, trimming, fertilizing, and weed control.
- **Landscaping Services:** Planting trees and shrubs, mulching, pruning, and debris removal.
- **Hardscaping Tasks:** Installing and maintaining walkways, patios, retaining walls, and other landscaping structures.
- **Irrigation:** Setting up and repairing sprinklers, drip systems, and related water management equipment.
- **Equipment Use:** Safe operation of mowers, trimmers, leaf blowers, chainsaws, and any specialized equipment.

All **employees, contractors, and subcontractors** engaged in landscaping activities are expected to follow these guidelines. It is the responsibility of management to ensure that all relevant personnel have access to and understand the information within this manual.

3. OSHA Standards Overview

3.1 General Industry vs. Construction Standards

Landscaping work often falls under **General Industry Standards (29 CFR 1910)**; however, specific tasks or projects may intersect with **Construction Standards (29 CFR 1926)** if they involve building or significant alteration of structures (e.g., retaining walls, water features). When in doubt, consult both sets of standards to ensure comprehensive compliance.

3.2 Core OSHA Requirements for Landscaping

OSHA does not have a single, unified “landscaping” regulation, so compliance involves adhering to **multiple regulations** that collectively address the variety of tasks landscaping crews perform. Key areas include:

1. Hazard Communication (29 CFR 1910.1200)

- Ensures that employees are informed about chemical hazards, such as fertilizers, pesticides, and other substances commonly used in landscaping.

- Requires proper labeling and availability of Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
- 2. **Personal Protective Equipment (29 CFR 1910 Subpart I)**
 - Defines requirements for PPE usage based on identified hazards (e.g., gloves, safety glasses, hearing protection, respirators).
- 3. **Machine Guarding (29 CFR 1910 Subpart O)**
 - Covers the safe use of equipment such as mowers, trimmers, and chainsaws, requiring guards and other engineering controls to protect users.
- 4. **Walking-Working Surfaces (29 CFR 1910 Subpart D)**
 - Addresses slip, trip, and fall hazards, including housekeeping practices and working on different terrain.
- 5. **Bloodborne Pathogens (29 CFR 1910.1030)**
 - May apply if employees are exposed to potential biohazards (e.g., cleaning up animal waste or sharp debris).
- 6. **General Duty Clause (Section 5(a)(1) of the OSH Act)**
 - Requires employers to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards that can cause death or serious physical harm, serving as a catch-all for risks not explicitly covered by specific standards.

3.3 State and Local Regulations

In addition to federal OSHA standards, many states operate their own **OSHA-approved workplace safety and health programs**. Some states or municipalities also have **pesticide application licensing** or other landscaping-related certifications and requirements. Always check local statutes to ensure complete legal compliance.

3.4 Employer and Employee Responsibilities

- **Employers** are responsible for:
 1. Identifying and mitigating hazards (e.g., providing the right tools, equipment, and training).
 2. Keeping up-to-date on regulatory changes and adapting company policies accordingly.
 3. Maintaining records (e.g., injury logs, training documentation) as required by OSHA and local authorities.
- **Employees** are responsible for:
 1. Following all company safety policies and procedures.
 2. Using PPE correctly and reporting damaged or defective gear.
 3. Reporting unsafe conditions or potential hazards immediately.
 4. Participating in required safety training.

By aligning company policies and practices with OSHA standards—and by clearly communicating responsibilities to both employers and employees—landscaping operations can be performed safely and efficiently, minimizing risks to people and property.

4. General Safety Guidelines

4.1 Housekeeping and Organization

- **Keep Work Areas Clear:** Regularly remove debris such as branches, leaves, and trimmings from walkways and worksites to prevent slip, trip, and fall hazards.
- **Tool Storage:** Store tools and equipment in designated areas when not in use; return them promptly to reduce clutter and prevent accidents.
- **Proper Waste Disposal:** Dispose of waste materials—especially chemical containers and sharp objects—according to local regulations and company policies.

4.2 Hazard Awareness and Communication

- **Conduct Pre-Work Inspections:** Inspect the work area for hidden holes, uneven ground, power lines, or other hazards before beginning tasks.
- **Report Hazards Immediately:** Use established communication channels (e.g., radio, phone, or reporting forms) to inform supervisors about unsafe conditions.
- **Safety Signage:** Post signs or barricades when appropriate (e.g., wet or recently fertilized grounds, overhead trimming) to warn coworkers and the public.

4.3 Safe Tool and Equipment Handling

- **Follow Manufacturer Guidelines:** Always operate machinery like mowers, trimmers, and chainsaws per the manufacturer's instructions and warnings.
- **Use Guards and Shields:** Ensure machine guards and protective shields are in place to avoid contact with moving parts.
- **Shut Down Before Maintenance:** Turn off and disconnect power sources before cleaning or servicing equipment.
- **Check Fuel and Fluids Safely:** Let equipment cool before refueling or adding oil to prevent fire or explosion hazards.

4.4 Teamwork and Communication

- **Use Hand Signals:** When working near loud equipment, use standardized hand signals to communicate with coworkers.
- **Maintain Visual Contact:** Keep visual contact with other crew members when operating heavy machinery or vehicles.
- **Coordinate Movements:** Plan sequences of tasks with coworkers to avoid collisions or conflicting work activities.

4.5 Emergency Preparedness

- **Know Emergency Exits and Procedures:** Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes, first-aid kits, and fire extinguishers.
- **First-Aid and CPR:** At least one team member on site should be trained in first-aid and CPR; all employees should know how to call for emergency help.
- **Incident Reporting:** Document and report any injury or close call (near miss) to management as soon as possible for prompt investigation and corrective action.

4.6 Weather and Environmental Conditions

- **Monitor Weather Forecasts:** Be aware of changes in weather (e.g., storms, lightning) and adjust work plans accordingly.
- **Plan for Extremes:** Schedule frequent breaks, stay hydrated, and use cooling methods (e.g., shade, fans) during hot weather; wear layers and waterproof gear in cold or rainy conditions.

- **Surface Hazards:** Wet grass or icy walkways can lead to slips and falls. Use caution and appropriate footwear in adverse conditions.

4.7 Ergonomic Practices

- **Lift Properly:** Bend at the knees, keep the back straight, and avoid twisting the torso.
- **Use Mechanical Aids:** Whenever possible, use carts, wheelbarrows, or other lifting aids for heavier loads.
- **Rotate Tasks:** Shift between different types of tasks to prevent repetitive motion injuries.

By adopting these general safety measures, employees can reduce on-the-job injuries, work more efficiently, and maintain a safe environment for both crew members and the public.

5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

5.1 General Requirements

- **Assessment of Hazards:** Employers must conduct a hazard assessment (29 CFR 1910.132) to determine the specific PPE needs for each job task.
- **Employee Training:** All employees should be trained on the proper use, care, and limitations of the PPE they are required to wear.
- **Maintenance:** Keep PPE clean, stored appropriately, and replace items when they become damaged or worn out.

5.2 Eye and Face Protection

- **Safety Glasses or Goggles:** Required when operating equipment that may kick up debris (e.g., mowers, trimmers).
- **Face Shields:** Recommended when working with chemicals or performing tasks that present a higher risk of flying particles.
- **Cleaning and Inspection:** Inspect daily for cracks or scratches; clean lenses and frames to maintain clear visibility.

5.3 Hearing Protection

- **Earplugs or Earmuffs:** Necessary when noise levels exceed safe thresholds, particularly around leaf blowers, mowers, chainsaws, and other loud machinery.
- **Periodic Testing:** Employers should monitor noise levels on the job site to ensure adequate hearing protection is provided.

5.4 Hand Protection

- **Gloves:** Select gloves suitable for the task:
 - **Leather or Reinforced Gloves** for handling branches, debris, or hardscaping materials.
 - **Chemical-Resistant Gloves** for applying pesticides or fertilizers.
- **Fit and Comfort:** Gloves must fit properly to avoid accidents, such as snagging in machinery.

5.5 Foot Protection

- **Sturdy Work Boots:** Slip-resistant and puncture-resistant soles are crucial; steel-toed boots may be required for certain tasks.
- **Ankle Support:** When traversing uneven terrain, consider high-top boots with ankle support.

5.6 Head Protection

- **Hard Hats:** Recommended when pruning trees, working near overhead hazards, or on construction-like projects.
- **Sun Protection:** In hot climates, broad-brimmed hats or neck shades can help prevent sunburn and heat exhaustion.

5.7 Respiratory Protection

- **Dust Masks:** May be required when exposed to dust, pollen, or grass clippings.
- **Respirators:** If applying pesticides or working with chemicals that produce hazardous fumes, employees must follow a respiratory protection program as outlined in 29 CFR 1910.134.

5.8 High-Visibility Clothing

- **Reflective Vests:** When working near roadways or in low-visibility conditions (dawn, dusk, or night), wear high-visibility apparel to remain clearly visible to motorists and coworkers.

Key Takeaway: Proper use of PPE is an **essential** aspect of safety in landscaping operations. By wearing and maintaining the correct gear, you significantly reduce the risk of common workplace injuries, illnesses, and accidents.

6. Tool and Equipment Safety

6.1 General Principles

- **Manufacturer Instructions:** Always read and follow the operator's manual for any piece of equipment (e.g., mowers, trimmers, chainsaws).
- **Pre-Use Inspections:** Check for loose bolts, damaged hoses, worn belts, and other signs of wear before turning on equipment.
- **Safe Storage:** Store tools in secure, dry, and designated locations. Keep sharp tools covered or safely stowed to prevent accidental contact.
- **Power-Off Protocol:** Turn off and disconnect power (or remove spark plugs for small engines) before performing maintenance or cleaning.

6.2 Mowers and Trimmers

- **Blade Safety:** Ensure blades are sharp and balanced; a dull or unbalanced blade can vibrate excessively and increase risk of injury.
- **Debris Control:** Check the terrain beforehand for stones, branches, or other objects that could become projectiles.
- **Guarding:** Never remove or bypass protective guards or shields; if damaged, they must be repaired or replaced promptly.

6.3 Chainsaws and Pruning Equipment

- **Kickback Prevention:** Keep a firm grip, maintain chain tension, and use properly functioning chain brakes or other anti-kickback features.

- **Correct Positioning:** Stand to the side of the cutting path and never overreach while operating chainsaws or polesaws.
- **Pruning Saws and Shears:** Keep blades sharp and clean. Dull blades can slip and cause injuries.

6.4 Power Tools (Edgers, Leaf Blowers, etc.)

- **Cord Management** (for corded tools): Position cords away from cutting paths or walking areas to prevent tripping or entanglement.
- **Fuel Handling** (for gas-powered tools): Use approved fuel containers. Refuel only when the engine is off and cooled to reduce fire and explosion hazards.

6.5 Maintenance and Repairs

- **Scheduled Maintenance:** Follow a set maintenance schedule for oil changes, filter replacements, and belt inspections.
 - **Qualified Personnel:** Complex repairs should be handled by trained mechanics or other qualified individuals.
 - **Recordkeeping:** Keep maintenance logs for each piece of equipment, noting the date and nature of repairs or service performed.
-

7. Hazard Communication (Chemicals, Fertilizers, and Pesticides)

7.1 Regulatory Requirements

- **Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200):** Requires employers to inform and train employees about chemical hazards in the workplace.
- **Pesticide Regulations:** Comply with federal, state, and local requirements, including licensing for pesticide applicators if required.

7.2 Labeling and Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

- **Proper Labels:** Never use chemicals from unmarked containers; ensure all labels are intact and readable.
- **SDS Availability:** Maintain an up-to-date library (physical or digital) of Safety Data Sheets for every chemical in use. Employees must have easy access to these documents.
- **Container Transfers:** If you transfer a chemical from its original container, label the new container with the product name, hazard warnings, and other required information.

7.3 Handling and Storage

- **Secure Storage:** Keep chemicals in clearly identified, dedicated storage areas with adequate ventilation, away from heat or ignition sources.
- **Spill Containment:** Use secondary containment (e.g., spill trays, cabinets) for pesticides, fertilizers, and other potentially hazardous materials.
- **Separate Incompatibles:** Store acids, bases, and flammable chemicals away from each other to prevent dangerous reactions.

7.4 Personal Protective Measures

- **PPE Selection:** Wear gloves, goggles, aprons, and respirators as recommended on the product label or SDS.

- **Safe Mixing:** Always add chemical concentrates to water (never water to concentrate) to prevent splashing or uncontrolled reactions.
- **Decontamination:** Wash hands thoroughly after using any chemicals, and follow decontamination procedures for clothing or PPE.

7.5 Emergency Response

- **Spill Cleanup:** Have spill kits and neutralizing agents readily available. Follow SDS instructions for managing spills or leaks.
 - **Exposure Response:** Know first-aid procedures outlined on the SDS (e.g., eye irrigation, skin decontamination).
 - **Reporting and Documentation:** Report chemical spills or employee exposures to management and document incidents as required by company policy and OSHA guidelines.
-

8. Ergonomics and Lifting Safety

8.1 Importance of Ergonomics

- **Injury Reduction:** Proper ergonomics help reduce musculoskeletal disorders (e.g., back strain, carpal tunnel syndrome).
- **Productivity:** Well-designed work practices minimize fatigue and discomfort, improving overall efficiency.

8.2 Proper Lifting Techniques

1. **Plan the Lift:** Check the load weight before lifting; clear the path and destination to avoid obstacles.
2. **Position Your Body:** Stand close to the load, with feet shoulder-width apart.
3. **Lift with Legs:** Squat down, keep the back straight, and lift slowly using leg muscles.
4. **Keep the Load Close:** Hold the load near your waist to reduce strain on your back.
5. **Avoid Twisting:** Pivot your feet instead of twisting your torso.

8.3 Use of Mechanical Aids

- **Dollies and Hand Trucks:** Whenever possible, use carts or dollies to transport heavy materials.
- **Wheelbarrows:** Balance loads properly to avoid tipping; do not overfill, which can lead to spills or loss of control.
- **Team Lifting:** For bulky or awkward items, use a two-person or team lift.

8.4 Task Rotation and Breaks

- **Rotate Tasks:** Alternate between tasks that stress different muscle groups (e.g., raking, digging, trimming) to reduce repetitive strain.
- **Stretching and Micro-Breaks:** Encourage brief stretching breaks to relieve muscle tension, especially during prolonged tasks such as continuous bending or lifting.

8.5 Early Reporting of Discomfort

- **Identify Issues:** Employees should report any persistent aches, pains, or discomfort early on.
- **Assess and Adjust:** Supervisors can adjust tasks, tools, or procedures to prevent an injury from worsening.

9. Heat Stress and Sun Exposure

9.1 Recognizing Heat-Related Illnesses

- **Heat Exhaustion:** Symptoms include heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, headache, and nausea.
- **Heat Stroke:** Life-threatening condition marked by confusion, high body temperature, and possible loss of consciousness.

9.2 Prevention Strategies

- **Hydration:** Drink water regularly, even if you're not thirsty. Avoid excessive caffeine or sugary drinks.
- **Rest Breaks:** Take frequent, short breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas, especially during peak heat.
- **Gradual Acclimatization:** Allow employees time to adjust to working in high temperatures—shorter shifts initially, gradually increasing.
- **Protective Clothing:** Wear lightweight, breathable fabrics; use wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses for sun protection.

9.3 Treatment and Emergency Measures

- **Cool Down:** Move affected individuals to a shaded or cooler area; remove excess clothing and apply cool compresses.
 - **Rehydrate:** Provide water or sports drinks to replace electrolytes if the person is conscious and able to drink.
 - **Seek Medical Help:** Call emergency services immediately if symptoms of heat stroke are present or do not improve.
-

10. Insect, Animal, and Plant Hazards

10.1 Insect Hazards

- **Bees, Wasps, and Hornets:** Wear light-colored clothing and avoid strong scents to reduce stings. Know the location of any nests.
- **Mosquitoes and Ticks:** Use insect repellent containing DEET or permethrin; wear long sleeves and pants in high-risk areas.

10.2 Animal Hazards

- **Snakes and Rodents:** Stay alert when reaching into brush piles or dark spaces. Use tools to move debris rather than hands.
- **Domestic and Stray Animals:** If dogs or other animals are present, ensure fences or gates are secure; avoid direct contact unless properly trained.

10.3 Plant Hazards

- **Poisonous Plants:** Identify and avoid poison ivy, poison oak, and similar plants. Train employees to recognize them.
- **Thorns and Spines:** Wear gloves and long sleeves when handling plants with sharp edges or spines.
- **Allergens:** Some employees may have allergies to pollen or certain plants. Provide awareness training and ensure access to medication if prescribed (e.g., EpiPen).

10.4 First-Aid Response

- **Stings and Bites:** Clean and treat wounds. Monitor for allergic reactions.
 - **Rashes:** Wash affected skin with soap and water immediately. Use over-the-counter anti-itch treatments or seek medical advice if severe.
-

11. Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention

11.1 Identifying Common Hazards

- **Uneven Ground:** Landscapes often have slopes, holes, or hidden roots. Inspect areas carefully before starting work.
- **Wet or Slippery Surfaces:** Grass clippings, irrigation runoff, and morning dew can create slippery conditions.
- **Tools and Debris:** Rakes, shovels, branches, and hoses on walkways can cause tripping hazards.

11.2 Control Measures

1. **Proper Footwear:** Wear slip-resistant boots with good tread.
2. **Housekeeping:** Quickly clear debris and coil hoses when not in use.
3. **Equipment Placement:** Set tools down in designated safe zones; do not block walkways.
4. **Barricades and Signs:** Mark hazards like newly watered areas or uneven surfaces.

11.3 Ladder and Elevated Work

- **Stable Base:** Place ladders on firm, level ground; if working on soft or uneven terrain, use ladder pads or stabilizers.
- **Three-Point Contact:** Keep two hands and one foot (or two feet and one hand) on the ladder at all times.
- **Proper Angle:** Use the 1:4 ratio (one foot of base distance for every four feet of ladder height).

11.4 Inspections and Training

- **Equipment Checks:** Inspect ladders and step stools for damage before use.
- **Employee Awareness:** Provide regular reminders and updates on slip, trip, and fall hazards, especially in changing weather conditions.

12. Driving and Vehicle Safety

12.1 Pre-Trip Inspections

- **Vehicle Walkaround:** Check tires for proper inflation and tread; ensure lights, signals, and mirrors are functioning.
- **Fluid Levels:** Confirm sufficient oil, coolant, and windshield washer fluid. Report leaks immediately.
- **Load Securement:** Verify that tools, equipment, and materials are properly secured in cargo areas to avoid shifting during transport.

12.2 Defensive Driving Practices

- **Seat Belt Use:** Require all occupants to wear seat belts at all times.

- **Speed Management:** Observe posted speed limits; adjust driving speed for weather, traffic, and road conditions.
- **Distraction-Free Driving:** Prohibit texting or using handheld devices while driving. If necessary, pull over to a safe location before using a phone or GPS.
- **Safe Following Distance:** Maintain adequate space—especially when towing trailers or carrying heavy loads—to allow for sudden stops.

12.3 Towing and Trailers

- **Proper Hitching:** Ensure the trailer is securely attached to the vehicle's hitch, with safety chains correctly crossed underneath.
- **Balanced Loads:** Distribute weight evenly and follow trailer capacity limits. An unbalanced load can cause trailer sway or tip-overs.
- **Extended Braking Distance:** When towing, allow extra time and distance for braking; adjust driving to accommodate heavier loads.

12.4 Parking and Unloading

- **Parking Area Selection:** Choose level ground for parking whenever possible; use wheel chocks on inclines.
- **Unload Carefully:** Open tailgates and doors slowly to prevent items from falling out; stay clear of ramp edges.
- **Public Safety:** When working near public roads or walkways, set up cones or signs to warn approaching vehicles and pedestrians.

12.5 Vehicle Maintenance

- **Regular Service:** Follow manufacturer-recommended maintenance schedules; address mechanical issues immediately to prevent breakdowns and accidents.
 - **Recordkeeping:** Keep logs for vehicle repairs, inspections, and maintenance for regulatory compliance and insurance purposes.
-

13. Emergency Procedures

13.1 Types of Emergencies

- **Medical Emergencies:** Heat stroke, severe cuts, insect stings, or other injuries requiring immediate medical attention.
- **Fire:** Can result from equipment malfunctions, fueling errors, or chemical mishandling.
- **Severe Weather:** Lightning storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and flash floods can quickly compromise outdoor worksites.
- **Chemical Spills:** Pesticides, fertilizers, and fuel spills require specific containment and cleanup procedures.

13.2 Emergency Response Protocol

1. **Assess the Situation:** Quickly determine the nature and severity of the incident.
2. **Ensure Personal Safety:** Before assisting others, make sure you are not placing yourself in danger.
3. **Call for Help:** Dial 911 (or local emergency services) as soon as possible, providing clear details about the incident and location.
4. **Administer First Aid:** If trained, apply first-aid or CPR until medical professionals arrive.

5. **Evacuate if Necessary:** Move away from fire, chemical leaks, or other imminent hazards to a pre-designated safe assembly point.

13.3 Muster Points and Communication

- **Designated Meeting Area:** Identify a safe, easily recognizable muster point for all employees to gather during an evacuation.
- **Roll Call:** Supervisors should account for each team member; immediately report any missing persons to emergency responders.
- **Chain of Command:** Clearly assign roles (e.g., who calls 911, who leads evacuation) and ensure everyone understands their responsibilities.

13.4 Post-Emergency Actions

- **Incident Investigation:** Once the situation is under control, supervisors or safety officers should document the cause and any contributing factors.
 - **Debriefing:** Meet with the team to review actions taken, lessons learned, and improvements for future responses.
 - **Restock Supplies:** Replace first-aid items or spill kit materials used during the emergency to stay prepared for the next incident.
-

14. Incident Reporting and Recordkeeping

14.1 Reporting Requirements

- **Immediate Notification:** Employees must inform supervisors of any incident or near miss promptly.
- **OSHA Recordables:** Injuries requiring medical treatment beyond first aid, loss of consciousness, days away from work, or restricted duty must be recorded on OSHA logs (e.g., OSHA 300 log).
- **Near Misses:** Document events that could have caused injury or damage but did not, as these often reveal hidden hazards.

14.2 Investigation Process

1. **Data Collection:** Gather photos, witness statements, and any relevant documents (e.g., training records, maintenance logs).
2. **Root Cause Analysis:** Determine the underlying factors contributing to the incident, not just the immediate cause.
3. **Corrective Actions:** Develop a plan to prevent recurrence (e.g., updated training, equipment replacement, procedural changes).

14.3 Record Retention

- **OSHA Logs:** Keep OSHA 300 logs and related forms for at least five years.
- **Employee Files:** Store training certifications, incident reports, and medical evaluations securely, with access restricted to authorized personnel.
- **Confidentiality:** Respect employee privacy when handling sensitive information, especially medical data.

14.4 Continuous Improvement

- **Review Trends:** Periodically analyze incident data to identify recurring issues or trends.
 - **Update Procedures:** Adjust safety policies, checklists, or training programs based on findings from investigations.
 - **Feedback Loop:** Encourage employees to report hazards or suggest improvements without fear of reprisal.
-

15. Training and Compliance

15.1 New Hire Orientation

- **Safety Overview:** Introduce core safety policies, PPE requirements, and hazard reporting procedures.
- **Job-Specific Training:** Tailor orientation to the unique tasks a new hire will perform (e.g., mower operation, pesticide application).
- **Hands-On Demonstrations:** Provide practical demonstrations on equipment use, fueling procedures, and emergency drills.

15.2 Ongoing and Refresher Training

- **Scheduled Sessions:** Conduct regular safety meetings (e.g., monthly or quarterly) to review key topics or address new hazards.
- **Seasonal Training:** Focus on heat stress prevention in the summer or cold-weather protocols in the winter.
- **Certification Renewals:** Keep track of licenses or certifications that need periodic renewal (e.g., pesticide applicator licenses).

15.3 Documentation and Tracking

- **Attendance Records:** Maintain sign-in sheets or digital logs of who attended each training session.
- **Testing and Verification:** Consider short quizzes or practical evaluations to ensure understanding of critical safety topics.
- **Skill Checks:** Periodically observe employees on the job to confirm they are following proper procedures.

15.4 Regulatory Compliance Audits

- **Internal Audits:** Assign a safety officer or committee to review company practices regularly, checking for OSHA compliance gaps.
- **External Inspections:** Cooperate fully with OSHA or state agency inspectors. Address any citations or recommendations promptly.
- **Policy Updates:** Revise this Safety Manual and related policies as necessary to align with new regulations or industry best practices.

16. Employee Acknowledgment Form

Our company is firmly committed to your safety. We will take every reasonable measure to prevent workplace accidents and maintain a safe, healthy environment for all employees. We value each team member not only as an employee, but also as a person whose well-being is crucial to their family, our local community, and to the overall success of our organization.

All employees are encouraged to report any unsafe work practices or hazards immediately. Any and all accidents or incidents—no matter how minor—must be reported to a supervisor right away.

In support of this commitment, our company will strictly adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local regulations, as well as internal safety policies and procedures. Failure to comply with these policies may result in disciplinary action. Recognizing these responsibilities, we commit to providing a work environment free of recognizable hazards and uphold the following principles:

1. Prevention is Key

We believe that all accidents can be prevented through effective safety and health policies.

2. Safety as a Daily Priority

Safety and health measures are integral to our work every day.

3. Accident Prevention is Good Business

Reducing accidents limits human suffering, creates better working conditions, enhances our reputation with clients, and increases productivity. Therefore, we will follow all relevant safety and health regulations.

4. Management's Responsibility

Leadership is committed to allocating the necessary resources to implement and maintain an effective safety program.

5. Employee Involvement

Every employee is expected to follow safe work practices, comply with company rules, and prevent injuries. Management will ensure open communication channels for all safety concerns and suggestions.

6. Leading by Example

Our managers and supervisors will model excellent safety practices, demonstrating a positive attitude and genuine commitment to workplace safety. They will also monitor conditions to ensure safety objectives are met.

7. Company-Wide Participation

Our safety program applies to all employees, subcontractors, and visitors under our scope of operations. Continuous improvement in safety awareness and accident prevention is our shared goal.

A safe workplace is only possible when everyone is involved and committed. Through teamwork and vigilance, we can protect one another from accidents, injuries, and health risks at work.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have received the company's Employee Safety Handbook and understand all policies, programs, and actions described within. I agree to follow and uphold these policies to ensure my safety and the safety of those around me.

Employee Name

(Print): _____ **Date:** _____

Employee Signature:
