

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. Dept. of Labor Launches Safety Program for Tree and Landscaping Workers in USVI and Region 2

Multi-year initiative aims to reduce injuries and fatalities in high-risk industries

Federal / **Published On January 17, 2024 06:01 AM /**

Staff Consortium **January 17, 2024**



A multi-year program is now underway to reduce worker injuries and fatalities in the tree and landscaping industries in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the U.S. Department of Labor has announced.

The [regional emphasis program](#) covers workers and employers in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Region 2, which includes New York, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico in addition to the USVI.

According to the USDOL, the program will first provide initial and ongoing outreach to employers, employees and stakeholders to raise their awareness of the hazards associated with tree trimming and landscape operations. Second, OSHA will conduct targeted safety and health inspections of tree trimming and removal, landscaping services and site preparation contractors to assess employer compliance and reduce employees' exposure to hazards.

The tree-trimming, tree removal, and landscaping industries are risky fields, with workers subject to falls from trees and elevated work platforms, endangered by falling trees and branches, and exposed to heat, chemicals, and threats of electrocution, according to the USDOL. In 2022, there were 222 fatal workplace injuries and illnesses in these industries across the nation, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"We want to make these workplaces safer for all workers in this industry," said OSHA Regional Administrator Richard Mendelson in New York. "By intensifying our focus on the tree and landscaping industries, we can help employers provide effective management of worker safety and health protection to reduce the extent and severity of work-related injuries and illnesses."

OSHA said it will provide assistance with safety strategies and compliance with federal safety and health standards. The help will come at no cost to small employers, according to the agency, and the program is scheduled to run until the fall of 2028.