

## Alabama Employee Dies After Tree Hits Aerial Lift, Worker Ejected

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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An Alabama company that provides tree-trimming services was recently under investigation by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) after one its employees died on the job.

Alabama Power had hired the tree-trimming company to clear trees away from overhead power lines in Webb, Alabama. The worker was reportedly in an aerial lift trimming a tree when an improperly cut tree fell on the aerial lift, causing the worker to be ejected and [fall from a height](#) to his death.

OSHA conducted an investigation into the untimely death of this employee and found two ways in which this accident could have been prevented. First, the employee was not wearing fall protection while in the aerial lift. Second, the tree was cut improperly, causing it to fall in the wrong direction.

The business was also issued two other serious safety citations including:

- Allowing employees in the fall zone where trees are being cut down
- Failure to clear and designate a retreat path before trees are felled

OSHA believes that the company was responsible for the wrongful death of this employee because of its failure to properly ensure that he was safe from harm.

Tree trimming companies must make sure that proper tree cutting techniques are used so that large trees that are being trimmed do not pose a danger to anyone nearby. All employees and equipment must be far enough away from trees so that when the trees fall, employees and others will not be injured. If these precautions had been taken prior to this fatal accident, it is likely that this employee would still be alive today.

In this case, OSHA's citations amounted to almost \$40,000. These fines are intended to send the message to this Alabama heavy equipment company that ignoring safety standards is unacceptable and can result in serious personal injuries and wrongful deaths.

**Source:** OSHA Press Release, "[U.S. Department of Labor's OSHA cites Alabama tree trimming company for safety and health violations following fatality](#)," Oct. 5, 2011