
Nursery Safety: Publications and Training

by Thomas D. Landis

Safety is a year-round concern but winter is a great time to review nursery policies and schedule training. I'm always on the lookout for good safety information and wanted to make sure that nurseries were aware of the latest information.

Simple solutions: ergonomics for farm workers

Baron S, Estill CF, Steege A, Lalich N. 2001. eds.
DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2001-111.
Cincinnati, OH: National Institute for Safety and Health. 46 p.

Backaches or pain in the shoulders, arms, and hands are occupational hazards when working in nurseries or tree planting. The technical term for these sprains and strains is “work-related musculoskeletal disorders” or WMSDs. One-third of all missed work injuries are sprains and strains, and one-fourth are back injuries. More importantly, they are also the most common causes for disability claims. Much of nursery work is done in a stooped position, and often in cool or damp weather. In addition, many nursery tasks require workers to carry heavy weights in awkward positions, kneel often, or move their hands and wrists repetitively. Equipment operators are subjected to repeated vibration. NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) worked with specialists in the science of ergonomics to determine how nursery worker could be made safer. This pamphlet offers some simple, practical, and inexpensive solutions. Although it deals with all types of farm work, nurseries should be able to modify some of these ideas to their own operations.

You can order Adobe PDF copies of this publication from the following website or contact NIOSH for hard copies:

NIOSH Publications Dissemination
4676 Columbia Parkway • Cincinnati, OH 45226-1998
Telephone: 1.800.356.4674 • FAX: 513.533.8573
E-mail: pubstft@cdc.gov
Website: www.cdc.gov/niosh

Preventing noise-induced hearing loss

Beckley B. 2010.
Tech Tip 1067-2321P-MTDC. Missoula, MT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service,
Missoula Technology and Development Center. 16 p.

Noise-induced hearing loss is almost always preventable and nursery workers can be exposed to loud noises for extended periods of time. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration mandates that employers supply personal protective equipment and provide training on how to use it correctly. This handy publication includes information about the causes of noise-induced hearing loss and provide practical ways to minimize exposure.

For hard copies of the pamphlet, contact the Missoula Technology and Development Center, or you can download PDF files from their website:

USDA Forest Service
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5785 Hwy. 10 West • Missoula, MT 59808-9361
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Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/pubs>

Increasing Nursery and Greenhouse Worker Safety

Langlois S, Coker CE, Posadas B, Knight P, Coker R.

Biloxi, MS: Mississippi State University, Coastal Research & Extension Center.

Website: <http://coastal.msstate.edu/nurserytrainingvideos.html>. Accessed 02-28-12.

On this website, you can access a series of DVDs called “The Three E’s of Nursery and Greenhouse Safety.”

Ergonomics - This relatively new science studies human capabilities in relation to work demands. Worker posture and position, lifting techniques, and repetitive motions are just a few areas of concern in the green industry. By understanding these risk factors, employers can develop processes and tasks to minimize the potential for worker injury while increasing productivity and morale.

Equipment - Maximizing the effectiveness of equipment while minimizing the chance for injury is important in the green industry. This video series offers examples of using common nursery equipment to develop good work behaviors among your nursery and greenhouse workforce.

Environment - Nursery and greenhouse workers are exposed to all types of environmental conditions. In this video series, learn practical tips for dealing with the heat, humidity, cold, and rain, as well as dangerous insects and reptiles.

These bilingual (English/Spanish) safety training videos can be the perfect complement to your new employee training program or can be used as refresher training material reviewed at routine safety or team meetings. They are available at no charge for online viewing (FLV) and download (MP4). Choose the FLV link to open a new browser window that will show a Flash Video file or choose MP4 to begin downloading a file viewable with many video players.