

# Safety and health alert

## 06/96 Tree lopper falls 10 metres

### Incident

A tree lopper fell 10 metres from a trailer mounted elevating work platform in Martin in November 1995 while lopping tree branches near power lines. He disconnected his safety harness and climbed from the elevating work platform basket to reach branches further from the basket. He slipped and fell 10 metres to the ground, receiving fractured vertebrae and concussion.

**Tree lopping is a hazardous occupation, particularly when the operation is inadequately planned, and there have been a number of fatalities and serious injuries in Western Australia in this industry in recent times.**

### Factors

1. The tree lopper attempted to reach inaccessible branches by leaving the elevating work platform basket.
2. The tree lopper's safety harness was disconnected.

### Recommendations

1. Employers must provide employees with training, instruction, information and supervision so that they are not exposed to hazards.
2. Tree loppers must position elevating work platforms so that all branches to be cut can be reached from the basket. The elevating work platform must be moved to reach branches not accessible from any position.
3. All persons working from an elevating work platform must wear an approved safety harness connected to an approved anchor point.
4. No work must be attempted within 3 metres of power lines without contacting the supply authority. A brochure is available from WorkSafe Western Australia on (08) 9327 8791 or from the Office of Energy on (08) 9422 5222.

### Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au), or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: [safety@docep.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@docep.wa.gov.au).

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