



New Jersey

BOARD OF TREE EXPERTS

SAFETY POLICY

Definition – A **Safety Policy** is a written statement by an employer stating the company’s commitment for the protection of the health and safety of employees and to the public. It is an endorsed commitment by management to its employees regarding their health and safety.

According to 7:3A-2.13, of the adopted rules of the Tree Expert and Tree Care Operator Licensing Act (P.L. 2009, c231) a registered business shall develop, establish, and/or adopt from other industry sources a **written comprehensive safety policy** within 90 days of initially registering with the Board. The policy shall be given to each new employee and be available to every employee of the registered business, and the registered business must comply with the policy. Guidelines for developing a comprehensive safety policy are available from the Board and are posted on the Board’s website at www.njtreeexperts.org, and found below.

Board of Tree Experts’ Actions Related to a Business’s Safety Policy

Further, the Board may (**will**) request from a business a copy of its comprehensive safety policy for review. The registration of a business that fails to develop and establish a written comprehensive safety policy within the first three months of registering the business with the Board may be suspended until such time as the business establishes its comprehensive safety policy.

The Board may also invalidate a business’s comprehensive safety policy if it determines that it fails, in its scope or any of its standards, to meet the industry standards for arboriculture and safety set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:3A-8.1. The business shall have three months (90 days) to revise a comprehensive safety policy invalidated by the Board. Following invalidation of a business’s comprehensive safety policy under the above, the business’s registration may be suspended if it fails to establish a revised comprehensive safety policy within three months (90 days) or if the Board invalidates the revised policy because it fails, in its scope or any of its standards, to meet the industry standards for arboriculture and safety set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:3A-8.1. In such case, the business’s registration shall continue to be suspended until the business again revises the policy, submits the revised policy to the Board for review, and the Board finds that the revised policy meets in full the industry standards for arboriculture and safety set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:3A-8.1.

Board of Tree Experts

101 West Veterans Highway
Jackson, NJ 08527
(732) 534 – 0982
njtreeexperts@gmail.org

Information used to develop this safety policy narrative, guidelines and sample was obtained in part from Oregon OSHA, Worksafe.gov, and the State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF).



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Guidelines for Developing a Comprehensive Safety Policy for Tree Care Companies

A Written Comprehensive Safety Policy

A written safety policy is the beginning of any safety program. The policy statement sets the tone and indicates what the consequences will be. It does not have to be elaborate, but a written policy should reflect the following:

- The purpose of the safety program
- Who will be assigned safety responsibilities and what their responsibilities and accountability requirements will be

Communicating and Enforcing the Safety Policy

Having a policy doesn't mean that you've done enough to ensure safety. Make sure that your policy is understood and followed. To protect the company, you'll also want to document that the company has shared the Safety Policy and enforced it, in the event of an accident. While the policy doesn't have to be elaborate, it must be comprehensive. Follow these guidelines to make sure that the Safety Policy is implemented and applied:

- All employees should sign a document stating that they have read, understood, and will follow the company policy.
- The signed document should be retained in the employee's personnel file.
- New employees should sign prior to actual work.
- As the policy is updated, new sign-offs should be secured.
- Safety training should be provided for supervisors and employees.
- Safety bulletins and other communications should be distributed as information changes.
- Discipline should be consistently applied to all individuals in similar circumstances.
- Supervisors should be fully advised of the impact of their actions, given special caution concerning sole reliance on verbal instructions for safety directions, and urged to provide closer supervision to workers who are known to have violated safety rules or have personal problems that may interfere with their attention to their work.
- As requested or scheduled, supervisors should perform independent inspections and follow up inspections to ensure the work areas and employees are conforming to safety rules.

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Specific Elements of a Safety Policy for Tree Care Companies

There are specific statements and elements your comprehensive safety policy should contain. They will help to not only reflect the company's philosophy and the intent of the company's safety policy, but also give specific information and guidance to employees about safety.

The **Comprehensive Safety Policy** should contain:

- 1.0 - A strongly worded affirmative statement that acknowledges and supports the company's safety responsibility
- 2.0 - Titles, positions, and locations of those responsible for policy design, enforcement, and modification
- 3.0 - A system for any employee to report violations of safety rules confidentially
- 4.0 - Documentation that establishes that the policy was given to all employees, posted prominently, and included in policy manuals
- 5.0 - A statement that supervisors are held to act as agents for the company
- 6.0 - A statement that any deviation from known policy by supervisors will not be tolerated
- 7.0 - A process to address how questions are to be answered and emergencies handled
- 8.0 - The penalties for employees who don't follow safety rules
- 9.0 - The Policy meets in full the industry standards for arboriculture and safety set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:3A-8.1. (Conformance with certain industry standards such as ANSI Z133 – 2012: Safety Standards for Arboricultural Operations and applicable OSHA regulations)
- 10.0 - Safety Policy closing with a signature place for employees to acknowledge

Checklist to follow to insure long-term success in creating a safety culture within your company:

- ✓ The Safety Policy is kept current with workplace changes and Board of Tree Expert policies
- ✓ The Safety Policy is clearly stated and easily understood
- ✓ The Safety Policy is communicated to all employees
- ✓ The Safety Policy is signed by senior management
- ✓ The Safety Policy is adhered to in all work activities
- ✓ The Safety Policy is a summary of the company's commitments
- ✓ The Safety Policy is well displayed around the workplace
- ✓ The Safety Policy is clear about the workplace/s to which it applies
- ✓ The Safety Policy is reviewed at least every year

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Sample: Comprehensive Safety Policy

This **Comprehensive Safety Policy** below is not complete. It is only meant to be a guide to get your company started. It is good starting point for you to develop your company's safety policy statement and put it in place at your workplace. A Registered Business must submit a copy of the developed Comprehensive Safety Policy to the Board of Tree Experts to satisfy the requirements of the law. It gives you a base from which to build a comprehensive safety policy and the options to build into it the elements you need to have a safer company. The aim is to produce a safer operation, not to prepare a set of documents that sit in a folder in an office. Once a comprehensive safety policy is in place, your safety culture can grow year to year as the operation develops.

SAMPLE TEXT:

This is the statement of safety policy and arrangements for: XYZ Tree Care Company, LLC

1.0 - A strongly worded affirmative statement that acknowledges and supports the company's safety responsibility:

At XYZ Tree Care Company, LLC we care about the safety, health and well-being of our employees. We value the contributions our employees make toward our success. We support local community interests, and value honesty, integrity, and teamwork.

We Value Our Employees

Our business operates with a goal of zero damage to people, property and product. It is our policy to provide safe working conditions. At XYZ Tree Care Company, LLC everyone shares equally in the responsibility of identifying hazards, following safety rules and operating practices. All jobs and tasks must be performed in a safe manner following industry safety and performance standards, as safety is crucial to the quality of our work and service.

Safety Policy

At XYZ Tree Care Company, LLC no phase of the operation is considered more important than accident prevention. It is our policy to provide and maintain safe working conditions and to follow operating practices and industry safety standards that will safeguard all employees. No job will be considered properly completed unless it is performed in a safe manner. XYZ Tree Care Company, LLC is concerned about the health and good work habits of its employees. In the event an employee is injured or unable to perform their job, we want to help them obtain the best treatment, so you can return to the job as soon as possible.

OTHER ITEMS WITHIN
A WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY POLICY
TO INCLUDE:

- 2.0 Titles, positions, and locations of those responsible for policy design, enforcement, and modification
- 3.0 A system for any employee to report violations of safety rules confidentially
- 4.0 Documentation that establishes that the policy was given to all employees, posted prominently, and included in policy manuals
- 5.0 A statement that supervisors are held to act as agents for the company
- 6.0 A statement that any deviation from known policy by supervisors will not be tolerated
- 7.0 A process to address how questions are to be answered and emergencies handled
- 8.0 The penalties for employees who don't follow safety rules
- 9.0 The Policy meets in full the industry standards for arboriculture and safety set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:3A-8.1. (Conformance with certain industry standards such as ANSI Z133 – 2012: Safety Standards for Arboricultural Operations and applicable OSHA regulations)
- 10.0 Safety Policy closing with a signature place for employees to acknowledge:

I have read XYZ Tree Company, LLC's Safety Policy statement and understand the commitment to the safety and health of employees and customers/clients.

(Employee's Name – Please Print)

(Employee's Signature)

Date

(Supervisor's Name – Please Print)

(Supervisor's Signature)

Date

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