

How to Conduct a Tailgate Talk

A Tailgate Talk is a brief training session on a single safety topic, typically held around the tailgate of a truck or another convenient spot. It should last 10-15 minutes with a small group of workers.

KEY POINTS

- Choose one safety topic per session.
- Keep it short and concise.
- Hold sessions with 6-10 workers.
- Ensure the location is comfortable and safe.
- Allow time for questions and answers.
- Document the training.

CHOOSE SAFETY TOPICS

- Focus on recent events or ask employees for suggestions.
- Use newsletters and local news for additional ideas.

PLAN LOGISTICS

- Limit sessions to 6-10 workers.
- Hold sessions earlier in the week (avoid Monday mornings).
- Conduct sessions weekly, dedicating specific time for training.
- Keep sessions under 15 minutes.

PREPARE AND CONDUCT THE SESSION

- Include visual aids and handouts.
- Familiarize yourself with the materials beforehand.
- Keep the presentation informal and avoid technical jargon.
- Involve workers in the discussion.
- Allow time for questions and have workers sign a training acknowledgment sheet.



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Louisiana's Tailgate Talk Series

The 5-Step Felling Plan



The Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Center serves training needs of local transportation agencies.

We are part of the Louisiana Transportation Research Center (LTRC), which is a cooperative effort between the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Louisiana State University (LSU).

Timely Safety Briefings

The 5-Step Felling Plan

HAZARDS & HEIGHT

Look for hazards! Always have your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). You want to make sure you are aware of what you are about to cut into. Things like bug damage and rot can be “sounded”. Don’t be afraid to bore into your tree. Electric wire, fences, homes, and other crew members need to be assessed as well. Use the “Triangle Method”: Think how you are measuring the tree, and determine where it will fall.

LEAN

Be aware of the amount of lean of the tree you are cutting. Create a “good” and “bad” side of the tree side lean. This means which direction the tree will want to fall, and how the weight is distributed throughout the tree. Be prepared to use things like pulleys, rope, straps, and other crew members to guide your tree in the preferred direction.

ESCAPE ROUTE

Stay away from the “Danger Zone”. Move from the base of the tree as soon as you are able. Your escape route should be clear of ground debris and should be opposite the direction of fall and at a 45 degree angle.

NOTCH AND HINGE

Assess which cuts you need to make: common notch, open face, humboldt, or jump cuts. How thick of a hinge will you need? (Rule of thumb: maximum thickness 10% diameter of the tree: maximum length of cut 80% of diameter of tree)

BACK-CUT PLAN

How do you intend to finish the back cut? This cut should be levelled with the open face notch. Always remember to finish the back cut on the good side of the tree. If this is not possible, be aware of hazards that could cause safety problems. If problems arise, reassess the situation before falling the tree. You may need to make two cuts or use wedges.

Resources

Working Safely With Chainsaws

<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/chainsaws.pdf>

CDC Natural Disaster and Severe Weather - Chainsaw Safety

<https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters/safety/chain-saw-safety.html>

OSHA Quick Card

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/3269-10N-05-english-06-27-2007.html>

Chainsaw Safety Training

<https://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltap/training.htm>

Tim’s Tips The Felling Plan

<http://www.forestapps.com/tips/tips.htm>

ArborMaster

<https://www.arbormaster.com/types-of-training>

Tailgate Talk Resources

Louisiana LTAP

<https://www.ltrc.lsu.edu/ltap/tailgate-talks.html>

NLTAPA

<https://nltapa.org/informationexchange/nltapa-tailgate-talks/>

T2 Tailgate Talks

https://www.cti.uconn.edu/cti/T2_Tailgate_Talks.asp

