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Workers' Memorial Day — April 28, 2009

Workers' Memorial Day recognizes those workers who died or sustained work-related injuries or illnesses during the previous year. In 2007, a total of 5,488 U.S. workers died from occupational injuries (1). Another 49,000 annual deaths are attributed to work-related diseases each year (2). In 2007, an estimated 4.0 million private-sector workers had a nonfatal occupational injury or illness; approximately half of them were transferred, restricted, or took time away from work (3). An estimated 3.4 million workers were treated in emergency departments in 2004 (the most recent data available) because of occupational injuries, and approximately 80,000 were hospitalized (4).

Work-related injuries and illnesses are costly. In 2006, employers spent nearly \$87.6 billion on workers' compensation (5), but this represents only a portion of total work-related injury and illness costs borne by employers, workers, and society overall, including cost-shifting to other insurance systems and most costs of work-related illness. Additional information on workplace safety and health is available from CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>.

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Work-Related Fatalities Associated with Tree Care Operations — United States, 1992–2007

Workers in various industries and occupations are involved in the care and maintenance of trees, such as tree trimming, pruning, and removal. This work is recognized as having many safety hazards (1). Although previous analyses have involved subgroups of workers who perform this type of work (2), no analysis has focused on identifying injured workers from all industries and occupations that perform tree care operations. This report summarizes the characteristics of fatal occupational injuries, using data from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) and a case series of fatality investigations conducted by CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program. During 1992–2007,* a total of 1,285 workers died while performing tree care and maintenance; 44% were trimming or pruning a tree when fatally injured. The most common causes of death were being struck by or against an object (42% of deaths), most commonly a tree or branch; falls to a lower level (34%); and electrocutions (14%). Most of the decedents (57%) worked for small establishments with 10 or fewer employees. Employers, trade and

*2007 data are preliminary. Final 2007 data are expected to be released in spring 2009 and will be available at <http://www.bls.gov/iif>.

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