

**Case 430. 75-year-old tree trimmer died when he fell approximately 20 feet after the branch he was sitting on broke at the crotch while he was readjusting his lifeline.**

A 75-year-old male tree trimmer died when he fell approximately 20 feet after the branch he was sitting on broke at the crotch while he was readjusting his lifeline. The decedent was wearing his harness sitting on a 4-inch diameter dwarf maple limb. The lifeline had been tied to a branch opposite of where he was sitting. He was in the process of transferring his life line up to the next crotch so he could move to a different part of the tree when the incident occurred. He unhooked his lifeline from his harness and was adjusting the lifeline when he the branch he was sitting on broke at the crotch. The decedent and the branch fell to the ground; the branch landed on him. Emergency response was called and the decedent was transported to a local hospital where he was declared dead.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following serious citations to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.

**SERIOUS: TREE TRIMMING AND REMOVAL, GI PART 53**

- RULE 408.15313(2): Head protection shall be provided and used, as prescribed in General Industry Safety Standard, Part 33. Personal Protective Equipment, being R 408.13301 et seq. of the Michigan Administrative Code, by an employee working on any operation covered by this part.

It was not ensured that the employee utilized head protection prior to beginning work.

- RULE 408.15331(4): If it becomes necessary to re-crotch, the employee aloft shall retie in or use a safety strap before releasing the previous tie.

It was not ensured that the employee retied in or used a safety strap before adjusting his life line, resulting in a fall causing fatal injuries.