NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM





LIFELINE







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Equal Employment Opportunity Policy:

It is the policy of Nelson Tree Service, LLC and its management to work continually toward improving recruitment, employment, development and promotional opportunities for minority group members and women.

It is the Company's intent to provide equal opportunity to all areas of its employment practices and to ensure that there be no discrimination against any applicant or employee on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, veteran status, marital status or sexual orientation. This policy extends to recruiting and hiring, to working conditions, training programs, use of Company facilities, and all other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. As a field employee, complaints may be made to your immediate supervisor (general foreperson, supervisor), or regional manager. As an employee, complaints may be made to your immediate supervisor, department manager or the Executive Director of Administration. If you cannot report to your Supervisor or Manager, or if a complaint you have made has not been promptly addressed, you should call the Executive Director of Administration at 1-800-522-4311.

Management will continue to be guided and motivated by this policy, and with the cooperation of all employees, will actively pursue the related goals of equal and affirmative action throughout the Company.





DEAR TEAM,

Character can be defined as, "What we do when no one is looking." While this is an adage I strive to live by, I'm human and don't always achieve my goal of doing the right thing. Because we are all human, we sometimes fall short. Even the best-intentioned people can make a mistake because they are tired, start to hurry, or make assumptions they shouldn't.

Luckily, we have our family, our friends, and our co-workers to provide another level of protection and help us do the right thing. In other words—other humans!

Because no one is perfect, we design our safety programs with human performance in mind. And because we are more susceptible to making mistakes when we are alone, many of our programs incorporate peer checking and other aspects of teamwork. These programs provide an additional and essential level of protection.

One example of peer checking is our **Critical Observer** program. While our work contains many hazards, the fundamental idea of this program is that certain situations are even more critical and more hazardous than others. Therefore, the critical situations defined in this program are particularly important, which is why we require crew members to perform a verbal double check in these important moments of our work.

The **Critical Observer** program requires two things to be successful. The first is solid, effective "three-way" communication. This means:

- 1. The operator asking for the peer check
- 2. The checker confirming that all is OK to proceed (or not)
- 3. The operator acknowledging understanding of what the checker confirmed

Second, and just as important, if the program isn't properly taking place, it is critical, in fact required, that other crew members speak up and correct the situation. I cannot stress enough this duty to speak up. It is this second layer of protection where we protect our co-workers, friends, and even ourselves from injury.

Make sure you fully understand the critical observer program. Ask questions if you have them. Learn and follow the program. It is every crew member's responsibility to understand this program and speak up if this, or any other safety rule, isn't being followed.

Every crew member bears responsibility for our safety performance. Don't allow a reluctance to speak up to cause someone to be injured.

Sincerely,

Jeff Jones

NEW FACES BRING NEW PERSPECTIVES TO NELSON TREE SAFETY DEPARTMENT

s part of Nelson Tree's Safety Department succession planning, we created the Assistant Safety Director position, which Michael Colantuono has been filling since July.

The majority of Michael's career has been spent in the electrical transmission and distribution construction industry, so he is no stranger to the hazards of line clearance.

"For the past 20 years, I've been on the safety side of electrical T&D construction operations," shares Michael. "Prior to that, I spent over 10 years in actual electrical construction."

Michael's career path includes additional, and unique, experience.

"I've worked in, supervised others, and developed federal-compliant programs and job-specific work plans in Human External Cargo (HEC), which involves a person hanging 75' below



MICHAEL COLANTUONO ASSISTANT SAFETY DIRECTOR

"I SEE A STRONG SAFETY PRESENCE VERY MUCH IN EFFECT HERE AT NELSON TREE SERVICE."

a helicopter for electrical transmission work; explosive and munitions ordinance (maintaining Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, DOT and Department of Justice compliance); working on barges in the middle of Ablemarle Sound, and building ice roads for work in bogs during winter months. Each of these specialized operations requires a high level of safety, for the

employees, the nearby residents, wildlife, and the public at large."

Michael believes his unique experience will add value to Nelson Tree's Safety Department, and we couldn't agree more.

"When electrical-related concerns arise, I can provide an internal response and reduce the time spent waiting on an external expert. Also, the electrical transmission is a heavy rigging industry, so



BRANDON MCANALLY, RSS REGION 472

"IT WAS IMMEDIATELY EVIDENT
TO ME THAT NELSON'S SAFETY
CULTURE IS PRESENT AT EVERY
LEVEL OF THE COMPANY"

Region 472's newly created RSS position in May of this year. As the region continues to grow and expand, Brandon will be responsible for safety in our Florida operations. He will also assist fellow RSS, Shawn Kinney, in West Virginia and Pennsylvania when needed.

Brandon earned his Masters in Environmental Management from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, with an emphasis on Environmental Regulations and Risk Mitigation.

Before coming to Nelson, Brandon served as a U.S. Army Captain and chemical officer, responsible for planning, supervising, and advising on all matters chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons defense. As additional responsibilities, he served as a battalion safety officer and environmental protection officer.

After eight years of active military duty, Brandon took on a civilian contractor position with AECOM in Afghanistan as a Hazardous Materials Site Manager. There, he managed other environmental professionals in hazardous waste reduction and spill response operations on various U.S. military bases.

It's evident Brandon is no stranger to working, and leading, in high-risk, high-stress, environments and his background is going to be a tremendous addition to our safety department.

"I've been managing operations and personnel in combat zones for many many applications are similar. The main difference is Nelson supports a man on a rope, and the line industry supports a conductor."

Michael's shift to the safety side of operations was motivated by personal reasons. "Unfortunately, when I started my career, which admittedly goes back a few years, the orientation was simply this, 'Three people will get killed on this job. Don't be one of them.' Over the years, I got tired of seeing people getting injured and attending friend's funerals, so I decided to make a difference."

Michael's determination to make an impact remains steadfast and his commitment to safety has earned him the nickname, Safety Mike. Because of this unwavering passion, it was immediately evident to Michael that Nelson's safety culture was in perfect alignment with his perspective.

"The effectiveness of Nelson's safety engagement stood out in my first conversation with Kevin Forgue and Jeff Jones," claims Michael. "I was immediately impressed by their commitment to management being accountable for safety.

"In the past, I've seen what can happen when companies don't value the importance of safety engagement. I've also seen where the employees will do what the boss wants, not what the safety guy wants. In contrast, I see a strong safety presence very much in effect here at Nelson. Here everyone wants the same thing at all levels ... to make sure our work family goes home to *their* families safely every day."

Michael relocated from Florida to Ohio for his new position.

He has two sons, ages 18 and 17. His oldest son has joined him in Ohio, and Michael hopes that his youngest will also relocate as soon as he is finished with school.

In his free time, Michael enjoys being outdoors. "I like anything that gets me out in nature, from mountain biking and hiking to riding my motorcycle."

We're fortunate to add Michael to our safety team, and we're pleased to say the feeling is mutual.

"I'm looking forward to this opportunity to promote the safety and well-being of our Nelson Tree workforce," insists Michael.

In closing, he shares some parting words that are the foundation of his approach to safety, "Be your brother's keeper!"

years," shares Brandon. "Risk management was paramount in everything we did and keeping people safe has always been an umbrella over my head during every operation."

Considering his previous experiences, it was a pleasure to hear that Brandon's first impression of Nelson's safety culture was positive.

"It was immediately evident to me that Nelson's safety culture is present at every level of the company; from the top on down. Implementation and enforcement aren't something done *after* the fact."

Since starting with Nelson, Brandon has been doing a lot of traveling (no surprise there) and training.

"I spent a week each in Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and another week in Tallahassee, Florida," shares Brandon. "Fortunately, I like traveling and it makes sense in order to get a handle on the culture and our operations."

Along with traveling the region to see the Nelson team in action first hand, according to Brandon, RSS Shawn Kinney has also been extremely helpful in bringing him up-to-speed.

"Shawn knows this industry inside and out. He let me know right away that I could bring any questions I had to him, and he would help me out, which I have and he has!"

We consider ourselves fortunate to have Brandon's fresh set of eyes. His background is certain to bring a unique perspective to the safety department.

"While I do not have the tree knowledge yet, I do understand how to analyze hazards and mitigate risk. In my former life, every operation could get you killed, so I am well aware that the work we do

every day is basically three feet away from possible death."

On a more personal note, Brandon is single. In his free time he enjoys gardening and riding his Harley Davidson Dyna Low Rider. He currently lives in Ocala, Florida, with his yellow labrador, Connor.

We look forward to Brandon's contribution. We believe his outlook is a perfect fit for the safety culture we hold so dear.

"If we aren't doing our work safely, then why are we showing up for work at all?"

We couldn't agree more Brandon. Welcome aboard!



FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT INSPECTION

BY KEVIN FORGUE SAFETY DIRECTOR

Your safety depends on the quality and condition of your tools. Proper inspection and maintenance of equipment ensures it will do the job it's been designed to do; a proper inspection means inspecting before the first climb of the day, after each climb you make, and on an on-going basis as you perform climbing and trimming tasks. This routine should become second nature and will ensure you return home safely at the end of the day to those that matter most!

CLIMBING SADDLES

Nelson issues three models of climbing saddles:

- 1) Weaver Basic Saddle
- 2) Weaver Mid-Level Saddle, and
- 3) Weaver Advanced Saddle (Leg/Batten Seat)

The core materials of all three saddles are leather, nylon webbing and nylon stitching. The webbing runs the entire waist and legs of the saddle and is fastened at each end with a stitched-in box design using nylon thread. Advanced saddles also include a rope bridge for the primary attachment point to the climbing line.

Remember, all life support equipment must be company issued from the Ashland facility.

FULL BODY HARNESS

The full body harness is made up of the same core materials as the climbing saddles, just more of it. To thoroughly inspect your full body harness, Hold the harness with one strap in each hand to check for twisted straps. Straighten any twisted straps so that they hang freely.

Inspect all areas of your harness for worn or frayed straps, broken stitches, faulty hardware, or any other signs of damage or excessive wear. If any of the above problems are identified, destroy and discard the harness. .

Saddle and Harness Inspection Checklist

Inspect all saddles and harnesses daily for the following:

- √ Stitching Check for broken, loose, fraying or missing stitching.
- ✓ Webbing Check for cuts, burns, kinks, abrasions, charring, cracks, excessive wear, swelling, broken strands/fibers*, and discoloration of material.

Pay close attention to buckle and D-ring attachment points, checking for unusual wear, frayed or cut fibers.

*Broken webbing strands/fibers generally appear as tufts on webbing surface.

√ Hardware

D-Rings: Check D-rings and D-ring metal wear pads for distortion, nicks, cracks, breaks, and rough or sharp edges.

No more than 10% of the material may be missing. No steel on aluminum.

Quick Connect Buckles (harnesses): Ensure the pawls of the buckle freely rotates. If not, proper engagement of the tab end to the receptor end of the buckle will be hindered.

Friction buckles (advanced saddles): Make sure the internal spring is working properly and is clear of wood and debris.

Rivets & Grommets: Check for loose, bent, or missing rivets and grommets. Rivet base and burr should be flat against the material. NEVER cut or punch additional holes in waist strap or strength members!

Belt Buckle: Inspect the buckle for distortion and sharp edges. The outer and center bars must be straight. Carefully check corners and attachment points of the center bar. They should overlap the buckle frame and move freely back and forth in their sockets. The roller should turn freely on the frame.

Make sure NO hardware is cutting into or damaging the belt or harness. Check <u>all</u> hardware for rust or corrosion!

FOCUS ON EQUIPMENT



Stitching in Battan Seat is torn. If any of the white material underneath the black outer coating is visible, immediately remove the equipment from use.

SADDLE BRIDGE

Advanced saddles are equipped with a rope bridge, which is designed to be replaced at the first signs of wear, or after six months of use, whichever comes first. Signs of wear include: fraying, cuts, cracks, tears, nicks, abrasion, unraveling, excessive wear, or exposure to shock loading. If the bridge shows any of these signs or was shock loaded, **REPLACE IMMEDIATELY!** (See video on how to replace rope bridge at www.weaverarborist.com).

Bridge Inspection Checklist

If you have been issued an advanced, bridge-equipped saddle, add the following to your daily inspection:



- √ Closely inspect rope-bridge near the rigging plate and under the rubber bumpers. Look for wear or compression of rope and replace if worn.
- √ Check for glazing on the black, outer coating.
- √ Look for areas on the bridge where the white core might be showing through.
- √ Check rope bridge ends and covers and replace at first signs of wear.

The double rope bridge has a knot on one end, which should never be undone!

Never attempt to burn the coating on the ends of the bridge if they become frayed. Replace the bridge!



Ensure friction buckles are not broken or missing - photo of saddle has missing buckle and trimmer simply tied a knot!



Closely inspect the box stitches; these are the strong points in the saddle and if several strands are broken, saddle must be taken out of service.



Broken webbing strands show up as tufts on webbing surface.



Life of saddle is five years. If no longer able to determine issue date, remove from service.



If belt loop is broken, remove saddle from service.



FOCUS ON EQUIPMENT

REMOVE FROM SERVICE

Climbing saddles or harnesses showing *any* of the following defects *shall* be removed from service immediately:

- Cracks in nylon, leather or other support material
- Deformation, thinning or cracks in the D-rings or buckles
- Loose rivets
- Broken or missing stitching
- Degraded or torn nylon strength members
- Exposure to chemicals, such as gasoline or anything other than rain water
- Heat or age-related damage
- Elongated holes in buckle parts
- Issue date is no longer legible



After 10 years, body harness nylon straps are no longer considered safe. For each supplier there is a black Velcro flap that covers the manufacturing date. If you can't read the date and the harness shows wear – pull it from service and replace.

Fall protection equipment that has been subject to shock loading, <u>shall</u> be removed from service immediately!

CARABINERS / SAFETY SNAPS

Aluminum carabiners and snaps wear out slowly over time from rope continuously passing through them and/or repeated usage.

Carabiners / Safety Snaps Inspection Checklist

- √ Frame: Check for grooves worn into the axis areas, cracks (especially where the non-hinged side of the gate meets the carabiner frame), corrosion, or pitted surfaces.
- √ Safety Snaps: Inspect closely for hook and eye distortion, cracks, corrosion, or pitted surfaces.

Carabiners that don't close completely, offer no resistance or have sticky or gritty gates must be removed from service.

Retire the carabiner immediately if cracks are noted.

√ Keeper (or latch): Make sure keeper operates freely and smoothly. Should seat into the nose without binding and should not be bent or obstructed.

Keeper Spring: should exert sufficient force to firmly close the keeper.

Keeper Rocks: must prevent the keeper from opening when the keeper closes.

Closely inspect frame, snap and keeper (latch).

Carabiner at right has stress marks and the locking sleeve is sticking.

SAFETY LANYARD

When inspecting lanyards, begin at one end and slowly rotate the lanyard so that the entire circumference is checked, completely working your way to the opposite end. Pay particular attention to spliced ends.

Lanyard Inspection Checklist

√ Rope – Inspect for fuzzy, worn, broken, or cut fibers.

Weakened areas will have noticeable changes in the original rope diameter.

Examine the ends of the safety lanyard used to secure the snap and inspect back splices. Ensure knots are tied, dressed and set properly.

√ Hardware

Carabiners and Snaps: Closely inspect for wear and possible damage. Ensure proper operations and?.

Thimbles: The thimble (protective sleeve) must be firmly seated in the eye of the splice, and the splice should have no loose or cut strands.

▼ Buckles: Check for nicks or corrosion

If any of these defects exist, remove from service!

CLIMBING ROPE

When inspecting rope, feel (flake) the entire length of the rope for variations in density, flaws or abrasions, including flat sections or hard nodules. Look for worn parts in the sheath, particularly in the last 20 feet on each end. Never use a rope that has a torn or fuzzy sheath, or if core strands are visible through the sheath.

When in doubt, fold the rope and lightly pinch. If the rope does not show an open area inside the pinch, the rope should be retired or can be shortened.

Ropes that have excessive wear, volume reduction or other flaws will fail this pinch test.

PINCH TEST FAIL PASS

Caring for Your Climbing Rope

Nothing wears a rope out faster than stepping on it, especially if it's lying on the ground. Stepping on your rope grinds dirt into its sheath and core, which impairs its strength, safety and performance. Additionally, rocks and other materials can cut or weaken the fabric.

If your regions provides them, use a rope bag to prevent dirt from finding its way inside your climbing rope.

Cleaning your Climbing Rope

To wash your rope, place it in a large mesh bag and seal the top with a drawstring. Pop it in the washing machine and wash with cold water on a long cycle without detergent.

Afterwards, take the rope out, drape it loosely in a wash basket and let it air dry in a cool dark place for a few days. Never put rope in sunlight to dry!

MAINTENANCE OF FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

Properly caring for fall protection equipment will prolong the life of the equipment and contribute toward the performance of its vital safety function.

Cleaning

Regularly cleaning of climbing saddles, harnesses and lanyards will maintain appearance, make them last longer, and keep clothing cleaner. Dirt can get into saddle materials, actually breaking them down. The cleaning process will also help spot worn components that could cause future deterioration.

√ Nylon - Wipe off all surface dirt with a sponge dampened in plain water.

Squeeze sponge dry and dip in mild solution of water and mild soap (Dawn Dishwashing Liquid).

Work up a thick lather and clean with a vigorous back and forth motion.

Wipe dry with a clean cloth and allow to dry overnight away from excessive heat and direct sunlight.

NEVER USE PETROLEUM-BASED CLEANERS, ACETONES OR OTHER CHEMICALS ON NYLON!

- ✓ Leather Wash with saddle soap and condition with a light coating of Neats foot oil, being sure to rub oil in thoroughly
- √ Hardware Lubricate snap hooks, carabiners and quickconnect buckles with WD-40 weekly.

A gentle cleaning will often resolve a sticky gate.

Transportation and Storage

Proper transportation and storage of equipment is as important as regular inspection and maintenance.

When transporting your gear, carefully hang it away from moisture and items that can soil it. Do not simply throw gear loose into truck storage bins.

Storage areas should be clean, dry and free of exposure to fumes, corrosive elements, and direct sunlight.

Never store your gear when it is wet!

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT





BY BEV EMMONS
ASHLAND FACILITY MANAGER

or those selected, and willing to take their first step into management at Nelson Tree Service, a specialized training program is in place to teach the requirements and skills needed for them to succeed in their new role—The GF

Mentoring Program.

The GF Mentoring Program is divided into two phases, with each phase having a unique focus.

Phase one focuses on the immediate skills needed to perform the job. For example, knowing how to fill out time sheets is critical to ensuring payroll and customer billing are accurate. GFs spend two days in the Dayton office learning how to navigate this process, along with other administrative duties.

New GFs also spend time with their RSS during phase one of the training program. While new GFs already know our safety policies and procedures, they now need to focus on ensuring those policies and procedures are being followed in order to keep the men they are now leading safe.

Finally, participants spend time with their supervisor getting fully trained and up-to-speed on all the remaining fundamentals required in their new role.

During phase two, GFs spend three days at our Ashland Facility where the key training themes are equipment and DOT requirements and safety, although topics such as leadership and team building are also addressed.

"EQUIPMENT TRAINING COVERS ALL ASPECTS
OF MAINTENANCE AND SAFETY INSPECTIONS,
WITH A STRONG FOCUS ON THE YEARLY
AERIAL INSPECTION AND DOT INSPECTIONS."

Typically, phase two of the GF Mentoring experience brings approximately 20 GFs to the Ashland Facility at one time. Hosting such a large group allows for enlisting speciality trainers from various organizations to participate in the program and provide comprehensive training. We also bring in equipment, ranging in age and condition, to add to the depth of the training. Exposing our GFs to a true representation of actual equipment in the field provides many teaching opportunities.

Equipment training covers all aspects of maintenance and safety inspections, with a strong focus on the yearly aerial inspection and DOT inspection. When GFs understand what is being inspected on the unit and how, along with what conditions are unacceptable, it empowers them to identify issues early, which results in a safer fleet.

Nelson's fleet is subject to the same rules any large trucking company must comply with; our DOT training program gives new GFs a perspective on why Nelson's focus on DOT issues is so important. Some of the topics covered are:

- What to expect when a unit is pulled over in a random roadside inspection
- When and how to properly complete a log book
- Ensuring drivers have the proper credentials for the unit they are driving
- Understanding weight classifications on vehicles

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT







Pictured from left:

Dave Emmons instructs the group on chipper maintenance (pg. 10).

Myrl Stanford training on the yearly aerial inspection process. Jonas Burns examines a saddle and explains wear points and daily inspection.

Joe Zito, former DOT officer, provides insight on what to expect in a DOT inspection.

For many of our program participants, this is their first experience with leading and supervising others. To help them prepare for their new role, training that emphasizes safety and leadership is also provided. These classes offer insight on how to build a culture within their new work group.

Team building and networking are also highlighted during the three-day program. In many ways, this experience provides the opportunity for participants to discover there is an entire network of people they can rely on for advice, answers, and support. This team building is further encouraged at the BBQ held on the last day of the program, when participants of all ages, fitness levels and athletic ability come together for a game of volleyball.

Although the days are long (6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) and packed with activities, having the opportunity to get away from day-to-day work tasks and focus on learning new information and skills, while meeting new people and communicating with peers, presents an inspiring and motivational atmosphere for the entire group.

Everyone involved with the program finds it to be an extremely rewarding experience, and it definitely helps our new GFs succeed in their new career!

The GF Mentoring Program is probably the best employee training program you can have. The program was in-depth and you got to actually meet and train with the staff people you talk to every day.

From how to fill out paperwork (including the problems you may encounter) to hands-on truck inspection and DOT requirements, the training provided was invaluable!

MIKE WOLFF, GENERAL FOREPERSON REGION 460

I've been through mentoring and manager training programs before but this was my first with Nelson. The equipment inspection training was something I hadn't experienced previously and I got a lot out of it. I also picked up some new climbing techniques in the climbing session and learned about new climbing gear and the Weaver saddles. It was good to see all the young blood coming in; the GFs of our future!

STEVE LARSON, GENERAL FOREPERSON REGION 468

Nelson Tree Service, LLC 3300 Office Park Drive Dayton, Ohio 45439



Our New Website is Live!

BY GAIL GABOR

CUSTOMER LIASON



fter months of hard work, I'm excited to announce our new website is officially up and running! While the old site served our purpose for many years, it lacked the responsiveness needed to keep pace with today's technology. For example, it was not easy to read or navigate across devices and constantly needed to be re-sized, panned and scrolled to view.

In contrast, the new site was developed to be a responsive web design (RWD), so it provides users with an optimal viewing experience across a wide range of devices, such as mobile phones, tablets, lap tops and desktop computers.

The site is also interactive, which means I can edit content directly—something I'm really looking forward to doing once I complete the training! This feature wasn't an option with our previous site, so it was challenging to keep information current.

One addition to the site is the JOB OPPORTUNITIES tab, which directs users to Nelson's *Career* web page when they choose to "apply now." Here, applicants can search for job openings by state, as well as watch a video of Nelson employees sharing first-hand what we do and what it's like to work for Nelson Tree Service. When applicants apply to a current opening, they are routed directly to BirdDog. This functionality is, by far, one of the biggest improvements we made and will significantly streamline our hiring process, as well as make life easier for our GFs!

The next big addition is our EMPLOYEE RESOURCES tab. From here, employees can access the Utilities Service Corp. site to view their paycheck, view and download company policies, and find links to partner organizations, such as Arborwear, Tree Care Industry Association, and International Society of Arboriculture, to name a few. These links will help employees stay on top of certifications and keep current on industry news.

More news can be found on our NEWS page, where industry current events are featured, along with past *LifeLine* issues and our Nelson video library. This may be the area I am most excited about customizing. My hope is for the majority of content posted here to come from employees, so consider that an invitation! I always want employees to have a reason to go to the site, so, if there's something you would like to see added, please reach out to me.

Since safety is so important in the work we do, I also want to highlight the addition of the SAFETY tab. Here, we've posted our Family First Rules and our most common Safety Data Sheets. This is another area that I anticipate will always be growing and evolving.

There's so much more content to check out, from FAQs to a more robust CONTACT US page. If you haven't already visited the new site, I encourage you to do so and I welcome your feedback!