



# TREE TRIMMER SUFFOCATED BY PALM BRANCHES!

A 40-year-old tree trimmer, Antonio V.\*, died after being trapped and suffocated by drooping palm branches. Antonio had climbed an 80-foot palm tree to just below the dead branches. He began to cut them away from the trunk. Some cut branches were tangled with uncut branches and they flopped down onto his head and shoulders. He could not breathe and suffocated to death. No one knows if Antonio was ever trained in palm tree trimming.

## WHAT WENT WRONG?

Antonio cut the branches from underneath. This put him directly in the path of drooping branches.

The homeowner did not check to see if Antonio was trained or accredited in palm tree trimming.

## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Palm trees should always be trimmed from above. Tree trimmers or their supervisors should be trained or accredited in safe palm tree trimming practices by organizations such as the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA) or the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

Homeowners should only hire tree trimmers or companies who have received training or accreditation in palm tree trimming.

### References:

ANSI A300 Part1-2008 Pruning Standard  
ANSI Z133.1-2006 Arboricultural Safety Standards

The California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program has been investigating work-related deaths since 1992. The goal of the FACE program is to prevent these deaths by informing workers and managers of worksite hazards and how to avoid them.

For a complete report of this (10CA002) or other cases, and information on the California FACE Program, contact:

California Department of Public Health  
Occupational Health Branch (OHB), FACE Program  
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, Third Floor, Richmond, CA 94804  
OHB phone: (510) 620-5757  
CA Relay Service: 711

Please allow at least ten working days to produce this document in an alternate format.

[California FACE Program's website \(http://cdph.ca.gov/face\)](http://cdph.ca.gov/face)

\* Not the victim's real name

# PLEASE POST

California Department of Public Health  
Occupational Health Branch, FACE Program  
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, Third Floor  
Richmond, CA 94804

FACE stands for "Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation." The purpose of the FACE program is to find problems that may cause work-related deaths so that employers and employees can help prevent them.

FACE is a public health program run by the California Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Branch, and funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor  
State of California  
Kimberly Belshe, Secretary  
Health and Human Services Agency  
Mark B. Horton, MD, MSPH, Director  
Department of Public Health  
September 2010

