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SAFETY GROUP HIGHLIGHTS SECOND TREE WORKER DEATH IN 17 DAYS

A local coalition focused on worker safety is calling attention to the safety needs of tree workers in the wake of two recent deaths.

MassCOSH, a local coalition for occupational safety and health, said on Friday that the death of David Bova, 34, who fell 50 feet from a tree while working outside a home in Rowley, should prompt enhanced safety measures among employers. An Occupational Safety and Health Administration official said an investigation into Bova's death is underway.

"Over the years, we have seen too many tree workers die needlessly on the job," Jodi Sugerman-Brozan, executive director of MassCOSH, said in a statement. "We demand employers in this field use every safety precaution to keep their workers safe."

On June 11, Lewis Umbenhowe, 38, fell to his death as he was working on a tree in Medway. MassCOSH also said that in October of 2010, Bova, who was from Salem, New Hampshire, was involved in a separate yet similar accident, where he fell 40 feet from a pine tree and was airlifted to a local hospital.

MassCOSH described tree work as an "increasing problem" due to increased demand associated with impacts of extreme weather.

Since January, there have been 28 work deaths in Massachusetts, eight of which resulted from falls, the group said. - Chris Triunfo/SHNS

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