

One of America's Deadliest Jobs Has No License in Utah — A Tree-Care Owner Is Working to Change That

Clean Cuts Trees founder Christy Hampton is petitioning state regulators to create a tree-care contractor license requiring safety training and certification.

SALT LAKE CITY, UT, UNITED STATES, June 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Tree Services](#) work is among the most dangerous jobs in the United States — federal data puts the fatality rate for tree trimmers and pruners at roughly 110 deaths per 100,000 workers, an estimated 15 to 30 times the all-occupation average. Yet in Utah, no state license or certification is required to do it. Christy Hampton, owner of [Clean Cuts Trees](#), has begun working to change that — starting with a formal request to state regulators and building toward legislation that would require real training to enter the trade.



Arborist-At-Work-CleanCutsTrees

The numbers are stark. The Tree Care Industry Association documented 243 tree-care fatalities from 2020 to 2023 — about 61 deaths a year — drawn from news reports and federal records. Falls and "struck-by" incidents, such as falling limbs and equipment, account for roughly three of every four tree-worker deaths.

"Most people have no idea that the crew they hire to take down a 60-foot tree over their house may have zero formal training," said Christy Hampton, owner of Clean Cuts Trees. "In Utah, a 'licensed' tree company often just means someone bought a business license. We license barbers and manicurists, but not the person running a chainsaw forty feet in the air next to a power line. That gap costs lives — workers and homeowners alike."

Utah does not require a state-specific arborist license; credentials like the ISA Certified Arborist designation are entirely voluntary. The state already acts in one narrow area — Utah's Overhead Line Safety Act requires certified specialists for work near energized power lines. Hampton argues the same logic should extend to the trade as a whole.

A two-step plan, starting with the regulators

Hampton has already taken her case to the Utah Division of Professional Licensing (DOPL), the agency with the authority to create a new specialty contractor classification for tree services. As things stand, such a license would require passing a business and law exam and proving insurance. DOPL board members agreed the need is real, Hampton said, but indicated they can act only once there is clear evidence that consumers' safety is at risk — uninsured crews injured on a homeowner's property, or property damage that lands on the customer.

Because DOPL cannot, on its own, require schooling or certification to hold a license, Hampton plans to take a bill to the Legislature — and to launch a public petition — requiring training, education, certification, or a trade exam to enter the business. That petition is coming, not yet live; Hampton expects to launch it formally as the campaign builds.

Her proposal would not lock the industry into a single program. Owners would need recognized schooling or certification through any of several respected bodies — the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), or the Association of Tree Care Professionals (ATCP). "Opening it up to multiple programs means there's a path for every kind of learner," Hampton said. (Draft quote — pending approval.) "Some thrive in a classroom, some learn hands-on in the field. What matters is that they're trained — not which logo is on the



Tree-Service-Family



Clean-Cuts-Tree-Service-Utah-Logo

certificate."

Hampton frames the effort as consumer protection as much as worker safety. When an unlicensed, uninsured crew is hurt on a residential job, liability can fall on the homeowner — and many homeowners' policies will not cover an accident involving an unlicensed contractor.

"This isn't about pushing the little guy out of business — I started as the little guy," Hampton said. (Draft quote — pending approval.) "It's about making sure that when someone hangs a shingle that says 'tree service,' there's real knowledge behind it. A license should tell a family that the person in their backyard knows how to come home safe — and how to keep that family safe too."

About Clean Cuts Trees

Clean Cuts Trees is a [Salt Lake City](#) and Northern Utah-based tree-care company specializing in pruning, removal, storm response, and tree health care.

Founded by Christy Hampton in 2012, the company is built on a commitment to professional, safety-first arboriculture and is leading an effort to raise the bar for the trade across Utah. Follow the campaign at <https://cleancutstrees.com/about-us/founders>.

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