TOOLBOX TALK BRIEFKIT

Aerial Rescue

A toolbox talk ready to deliver for foremen and supervisors. An 8 to 10 minute spoken script plus a briefing register for the team to sign.

REFERENCE	TBT-AERIAL-RESCUE-001	**DURATION**	8 to 10 minutes
DATE		**SITE**	
TRAINER (PRINT)		**SIGNATURE**	

1 Why it matters

Aerial rescue sits under the Industry Code of Practice for Arboriculture: Tree Work at Height, and AA Technical Guide 1: Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue. The principle is simple: nobody goes up a tree unless there is a worked out rescue plan, the resources are ready, and a trained rescuer is on the ground able to get them down. A climber left hanging in a harness can go downhill fast, so speed is everything, and the rescuer's own safety always comes first. Most rescues that go wrong are jobs where nobody had rehearsed it and the ground crew froze. We sort all of that before the climb, not in the middle of the emergency.

2 PPE required for this task

- Climbing helmet with chin strap (EN 12492)
- Harness and a ready rescue system rated for the task
- Sturdy boots with good grip
- Eye and face protection
- Close fitting gloves

3 What to say

Spoken script for the supervisor. Read or paraphrase, in order.

1 The plan comes before the climb

No climber leaves the ground until we have a rescue plan we all agree on. Who the rescuer is, what kit they'll use, how we get the casualty down, who calls 999. If we can't answer those, nobody climbs. The plan is made calm, on the ground, not shouted out while someone is hanging above us.

2 Minutes matter, so we rehearse

A climber left hanging in a harness can become a life threatening emergency in minutes, not hours. That's why we don't work the rescue out on the day. We practise it at regular intervals so the ground crew moves without having to think. If it's been a long time since anyone here did a rescue drill, tell me, because that's the gap that gets people hurt.

3 Who the rescuer is

There is a named rescuer on every climb: a ground person who is trained, competent and equipped to climb and bring the casualty down. Not just whoever happens to be closest. That is why we never have a lone climber. Minimum two people on any climb, so there is always someone able to go up and get you.

4 Kit ready at the base of the tree

The rescue kit is laid out and checked at the foot of the tree before the climb starts, not buried in the truck. Access line and rescue system, a sharp cutting tool, first aid kit, and a way to communicate. If you would have to run to the van to start a rescue, we are already too slow.

5 Get them down safely and fast

The job is a controlled lower to the ground as quickly as you safely can. Fast, but not reckless. Your own safety comes first every time, because a second casualty stuck in the tree helps nobody. Get to them, make them safe on the system, and bring them down under control.

6 Call 999 early

Assess the casualty and, if there is any doubt, call the emergency services before you start climbing, not after. Give them the location and the access details so they actually find us, and put someone on the gate to wave the ambulance in. Losing five minutes because nobody guided them onto site can cost a life.

7 **Once they are on the ground**

Treat and monitor them. If they took a fall or were hung in the harness, keep watching them even if they say they're fine, because the effects of being suspended can show up after you get them down. Keep them still if you suspect any injury, and let the professionals take over when they arrive.

8 **Leave the scene as it is**

Once everyone is safe and the casualty is being looked after, try to leave things as they are. Don't strip the tree, don't pack the kit away, don't tidy up. If it was a serious one it may need looking into, and the ropes, anchors and gear left as they were found tell the story of what happened. Take a few photos if you can. Getting the casualty helped always comes first, but after that, hands off until we know it's fine to move things.

9 **Good climbing setup means fewer rescues**

The best rescue is the one you never need. That comes from a sound system on the way up: two high anchors wherever it's practical, a primary system with a proper backup, and keeping any possible fall under 500mm. Test load bearing anchors with your full body weight before you trust them. Set it up right and most rescues never have to happen.

4 Common mistakes to call out

No rescue plan agreed before the climb starts

Assuming the fire brigade will do the rescue (they can be far too slow to reach a hung climber)

Rescue kit left in the truck instead of ready at the base of the tree

Only one competent climber on site, so nobody can reach the casualty

Never practising the rescue, so the ground crew freezes when it happens for real

The rescuer rushing in with no thought for their own safety and becoming a second casualty

Nobody calling 999 early, or nobody ready to guide the ambulance onto site

Standing a rescued climber straight up or leaving them hanging while you fetch kit, forgetting the danger of suspension

5 Watch on site this week

What the supervisor should be actively spotting on walk-arounds.

Climbs starting with no rescue plan talked through

Rescue kit not laid out and checked at the foot of the tree

Only one person on site who can actually climb

Ground crew who cannot tell you who the rescuer is or what they would do first

A team that has not practised an aerial rescue in a long time

Weak or unclear communication between the climber and the ground

Access or address details nobody has ready for the emergency services

6 Confirm the team understood

Ask one or two of these at the end of the talk.

1. Before a climber goes up, what has to be in place? (An agreed rescue plan, the kit ready at the base, a trained rescuer, and everyone clear on their role.)
2. Who is the rescuer on this job, and what is the first thing they would do? (The named, trained ground person; assess the casualty, call 999 if needed, get to them and lower them under control.)
3. Why do we practise aerial rescue regularly? (A hung climber can become life threatening in minutes, so the ground crew has to act fast without working it out on the day.)
4. The rescuer reaches an unconscious hanging climber. What is the priority? (A controlled lower to the ground without the rescuer getting hurt, then casualty care and monitoring.)

Briefing register: Aerial Rescue

All operatives who attend this toolbox talk must sign below. Their signature confirms they have heard and understood the briefing.

Briefing delivered by:

Name (print):		**Date:**	
Signature:		**Time:**	
Site:			

Attendees. I confirm I have heard and understood the briefing detailed above:

#	Name (print)	Company / Role	Signature	Date	CSCS / Ticket No.
1					
2					
3					
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11					
12					

Keep this register in the site Safety File. Additional sheets may be appended if more than 12 operatives are briefed.