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WORKSAFE

Use the gear you've got

Safety gear is no good when it is sitting in your vehicle – and it needs to be used properly.

That is the lesson following the sentencing of Stumpmaster Limited last week in the North Shore District Court.

Stumpmaster was cutting down a palm tree from a property when a woman walked into the path of the falling tree. The victim suffered fractures and a laceration which required six days hospitalisation.

Our investigation found that there was no effective exclusion zone around the tree work to ensure public safety. Stumpmaster had placed three cones in the area, but they were not placed two tree-lengths from the tree being felled and there was no attempt to cordon off the area to restrict access or notify the public of the works.

Stumpmaster had suitable signage available at its office and extendable barriers and tape in its vehicle at the site.

Our Deputy General Manager, Investigations and Specialist Services Simon Humphries said that the incident was completely avoidable.

“Stumpmaster had extendable barriers and tape available to mark out an exclusion zone but chose not to use it. As a result, an innocent party has received traumatic injuries.”

“You are responsible for ensuring that other people are not put at risk by the work of your business. This includes members of the public who could be affected by a work activity”.

Stumpmaster Limited was convicted and fined \$90,000 and ordered to pay \$18,500 reparation to the victim. The maximum penalty was a fine not exceeding \$1,500,000.

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