

## *TREE TRIMMING OUT ON A LIMB: PRIOR TO THE STORM*

### **Trap**

Tony had put it off long enough. The hurricane season was just around the corner and the big mango trees had to be trimmed. Tony found a flyer stuck under his front door mat. He called the number and a voice answered, "Tree Service." Tony discussed the work he wanted to have done and was impressed by the very low estimate. He felt there was more he should know before making his decision, but what questions should be asked?

### **Tips**

Here are some suggestions to protect yourself from damage to your trees, home or from tree trimmers who may injure themselves while on your property:

- Insurance for the tree industry is very expensive. Companies which give low-ball estimates often do not have sufficient insurance coverage. Ask to see a certificate of insurance and then call the insurance company to verify its status. Avoid businesses that can't show proof of Worker's Compensation Insurance.
- Qualify the business. Look for affiliations with trade associations. Some, like the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), and International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) offer the industry accreditation and certification.
- Ask if the business has a certified arborist on staff. Improper pruning (such as tree topping) kills more trees than any other trimming mistake.
- Ask friends and neighbors for recommendations. Check to see if your Home Owner's Association can provide references or referrals.
- Ask if the company drug tests workers regularly.
- Make sure the company picks up all cuttings. Most cities do not pick up brush left by contractors. It could leave the home owner open to fines and other costs.
- Don't pay in advance. Only pay when the job is completed. It is best to pay by credit card or check.
- Get a detailed contract in writing or you may find yourself out on a limb.

**For more information, contact Consumer Affairs at 561-712-6600  
(Boca/Delray 888-852-7362 toll free)**

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