

PTCA NEWS

Improving San Diego's quality of life through proper tree care.

UPCOMING PTCA GENERAL MEETING

October Meeting: Global Wood Sourcing - A Guitar Maker's Perspective

Ever wonder how a tree goes from growing in a forest to becoming a world-class guitar?

Join us Tuesday, October 6 at 6:00 PM at Filippi's Pizza on Kearny Villa Road for a unique look at arboriculture, forestry, sustainability, and what happens to wood long after it leaves the stump.

Our featured speaker will be Scott Paul – Director of Sustainability at Taylor Guitars.

Scott oversees Taylor Guitars' sustainability initiatives around the world, including the award-winning Ebony Project in Cameroon, which has planted more than 80,000 trees, and the Koa Project in Hawaii, which has successfully planted more than 50,000 trees.

Before joining Taylor Guitars, Scott spent 25 years in Washington, D.C., working in forest policy and environmental advocacy. His career has included work with the White House Office on Environmental Policy, 14 years with Greenpeace (where he

was the first person in over 100 years to be arrested for Sailormongering), and participation in United Nations forest policy discussions dating back to 1995.

Needless to say, this guy knows a thing or two about trees.

For those of us who spend our days pruning, planting, diagnosing, preserving—and occasionally removing—trees, this presentation gives us an opportunity to look beyond the urban forest and see how forestry, sustainability, conservation, and responsible wood sourcing connect on a global scale.

And because it's Taylor Guitars, we'll finally get to talk about trees without someone asking us, "So...can you just top it?"

Come for the trees. Stay for the pizza. Learn how responsible forestry can eventually hit all the right notes.

We packed the room in September—let's do it again in October!



Monthly Meeting Details

Date: Tuesday, October 6
5:00: Executive Meeting
All Members Welcome
6:00: General Meeting

Address: Filippi's Pizza Grotto
5353 Kearny Villa Rd
San Diego, CA 92123

Cost: \$15 for Members
that pre-register
\$35 for day-of
Members,
Non-members

Global Wood Sourcing - A
Guitar Maker's Perspective
Scott Paul

Register Online
www.ptcaosd.wildapricot.org

Highlights from this Issue

Page 4	PTCA RECAP September Meeting Recap: Wildlife Trained Arborist, A Crash Course
Page 5	PTCA EVENT PTCA Climbers: Palm Tree Climbing Safety Course
Page 6	PTCA RECAP Saluting Branches Recap
Page 8	ARBORIST BMPS Electrical Safe- ty Rules for Tree Trimming Professionals
Page 10	Upcoming Industry Events

DEC

SAVE THE DATE

05

PTCA HOLIDAY PARTY

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For membership applications
 Please make request via e-mail
 at ptca@epicentermgmt.us

OUR MISSION is to improve our community's quality of life by making our urban forest safer and more beautiful through education and proper tree care.



.....
EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS are held on the first Tuesday of each month. The meeting site changes from month to month, please keep an eye on the newsletter for updated venue information. The cost to attend general meetings is \$15 for members (*who pre-register*), \$35 for members at the door, and \$35 for non-members.

During the summer months, arboricultural tours ("Tree Walks") are featured throughout San Diego County. These are free to members and 25.00 to non members.

Information and registration for upcoming meetings is available at our website at www.ptcaosd.wildapricot.org.

CEUs are available!

PTCA ANNUAL SEMINAR & FIELD DAY is

held every August, featuring industry experts bringing the latest research and information to San Diego's historic Balboa Park.

Cosponsored by the Professional Tree Care Association of San Diego and City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department, this is your best local opportunity to get information or training in your field of tree care.

Have an event for our calendar?

Submit it to:

kathleen@epicentermgmt.us

Interested in Advertising?

Please Contact:

heather@epicentermgmt.us

VISIT US ON THE WEB!

www.ptcaosd.wildapricot.org

Membership Information

DID YOU KNOW....

Organizational Membership Bundles

A membership bundle is a collection of members who are linked together and managed by one of their members – the bundle coordinator. The bundle coordinator is responsible for adding new members to the bundle. If your membership class is Commercial, Municipal Organization, Organizational & Professional Affiliate Organization or Vendor, you can add up to 4 additional members to your organizational membership

License & Insurance Information

Commercial members are required to submit CSLB License information and proof of insurance (see below) This is required to be on the referral list. Submit yours today to ptca@epicentermgmt.us

Annual Renewal

PTCA membership dues are renewed annually starting on July 15th. Invoices are sent electronically on July 1st each year. Invoices are due upon receipt. Failure to renew may result in a lapse of membership and forfeiture of membership discounts and other benefits.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Commercial *\$125.00 annually*

Commercial members provide tree-related services for municipal, commercial, residential, utility clients, and meet the following requirements: Minimum \$1,000,000.00 public liability and property damage insurance (combined single limit). California State Contractor's License with a classification of C-27 or C-61 (D-49). Worker's Compensation insurance certificate must specify a labor code of 0106 (tree pruning) and include coverage of tree work at heights exceeding twelve feet (12'). Current certificates shall be on file with PTCA annually. Members of this classification shall be entitled to refer to Association membership, including use of the Association logo in advertising and shall be entitled to vote on all matters pertaining to the Association, including changes to the Association's bylaws.

Vendors *\$125.00 annually*

Members who sell, rent or lease products utilized by the tree care industry or perform horticultural spraying, fertilizing, and consulting, etc. and are not involved in pruning or removal. Appropriate current state or ISA licenses or certificates shall be kept on file with the Association. Members of this classification shall be entitled to refer to Association membership, including use of the Association logo in advertising and shall be entitled to vote on all matters pertaining to the Association, including changes to the Association's bylaw.

Municipal – Organization *\$125.00 annually*

The governing body or representatives of government, agencies, and schools. Members of this classification shall be entitled to refer to Association membership, including use of the Association logo in advertising. Members of this classification shall be entitled to reduced admission fees for attendance at workshops and seminars for four representatives. One per entity shall be entitled to vote on all Association matters, except bylaw changes.

Municipal – Individual *\$40.00 annually*

The governing body or representatives of government, agencies, and schools. Members of this classification shall be entitled to refer to Association membership, including use of the Association logo in advertising. Members of this classification shall be entitled to reduced admission fees for attendance at workshops and seminars for four representatives. One per entity shall be entitled to vote on all Association matters, except bylaw changes.

Organizational and Professional Affiliate – Organization *\$125.00 annually*

Representatives of other related horticultural programs. Members of this classification shall be entitled to refer to Association membership, including use of the Association logo in advertising, reduced admission fees for attendance at workshops and seminars for three representatives. One per entity shall be entitled to vote on all Association matters, except bylaw changes

Organizational and Professional Affiliate – Individual *\$40.00 annually*

Representatives of other related horticultural programs. Members of this classification shall be entitled to refer to Association membership, including use of the Association logo in advertising, reduced admission fees for attendance at workshops and seminars for three representatives. One per entity shall be entitled to vote on all Association matters, except bylaw changes.

Student *\$35.00 annually*

Must provide evidence/proof. Members of this classification shall be entitled to attend monthly meetings and reduced admission fees for attendance at PTCA of San Diego workshops and seminars. No processing/late fee charges.

Want to check your member status, category, member listing or add additional team members? Contact Heather Crippen for assistance (ptca@epicentermgmt.us).

PTCA GENERAL MEETING RECAP**September Meeting Recap: Wildlife Trained Arborist, A Crash Course**

If the packed room at Filippi's was any indication, September's PTCA meeting definitely ruffled some feathers—in a good way.

We had a fantastic turnout for our September meeting, with nearly every seat filled and plenty of arborists, tree care professionals, landscapers, and industry members ready to dig into a subject that sometimes gets overlooked while we're busy looking at deadwood, defects, targets, and whether the crew can actually get the bucket truck into the backyard.

Our featured speaker, Lissette Rios, Urban Biologist and Certified Arborist, walked us through the Best Management Practices for Tree Care for Birds and Other Wildlife.

And she gave us plenty to "cheep" about.

Lissette broke down an increasingly important part of professional tree care: remembering that when we climb into a tree, we may be entering somebody else's home.

Trees aren't just landscape assets that need to be pruned, removed, inspected, or managed. They provide nesting sites, shelter, food, and habitat for birds and countless other wildlife species. That means sometimes the most important thing an arborist can identify in a tree isn't the species, a pruning cut, or a structural defect—it's the little set of eyes staring back at you from a nest.

Lissette discussed how arborists can recognize potential wildlife conflicts, what to look for before beginning work, and how a little additional observation and planning can prevent a much bigger problem once the saws start running.

She also covered the potential consequences of disturbing, damaging, or removing active nests. It was a good reminder that the old approach of "we'll figure it out when we get up there" isn't always going to cut it.

Pun intended.

We were also fortunate to hear from Dan Simpson, who added some great insight from his experiences working at the San Diego Zoo.

Most of us have had to work around dogs, angry neighbors, swimming pools, power lines, bee hives, patio covers, and the occasional homeowner watching every cut from the window.

Dan had a slightly different challenge: rare and endangered birds.

His experiences pruning and managing trees around sensitive bird species at the Zoo added another layer to the conversation. When the wildlife you're working around may be rare, endangered, or part of an important conservation program, "just one more cut" can take on a whole different meaning.

Dan's stories reinforced many of the points Lissette discussed about communication, observation, planning,



and understanding what might be living in the canopy before work begins.

One of the best parts of the evening was how engaged everyone became.

The questions kept coming, and the discussion included experiences from people working at every level of our industry—from large tree care operations to smaller companies and backyard gardeners.

That is exactly what these meetings are supposed to do.

A good presentation gives you information. A great presentation has you thinking about your next job before you've even left the room.

Lissette definitely accomplished that.

Everyone was able to take something home that could be applied in the field. For some, it may mean adding another step to a pre-work inspection. For others, it may mean educating crews about what to look for or knowing when it is time to stop work and ask more questions.

And for everyone else, maybe it's simply a reminder to look up before firing up.

Wildlife awareness is still a relatively new subject for many people in our industry, particularly smaller and newer companies that may not yet have formal wildlife procedures in place. As arboriculture continues to evolve, however, understanding how our work interacts with the larger urban ecosystem is becoming another important branch of professional tree care.

Yes, branch was intentional.

A huge thank you to Lissette Rios for sharing her knowledge with us, to Dan Simpson for adding his unique experiences to the discussion, and to everyone who attended and helped make September another packed and interactive PTCA meeting.

PTCA UPCOMING EVENT

PTCA Climbers: Palm Tree Climbing Safety Course

PTCA is proud to introduce the inaugural PTCA Climbers event, formerly known as UTCA, with a full day focused on palm tree climbing safety.

Join us on October 10, 2026, at Kit Carson Park in Escondido, this bilingual English/Spanish program will feature demonstrations and instruction from experienced climbers and industry professionals. Attendees will gain practical insight into palm tree inspection, workplace safety, proper equipment selection, climbing techniques, and Aerial rescue procedures.

Featured instructors include Joe Wurzel, Vicente Cortez, Ricardo Vazquez, Martin Morales, and Javier Quiroz.

This program is designed as a demonstration-based learning experience, giving attendees the opportunity to observe proven techniques, hear directly from experienced climbers, and strengthen their understanding of safe palm tree work.

5.5 CEUs available



PTCA PALM TREE CLIMBING SAFETY COURSE
Curso de Seguridad para Trepas Palmeras de PTCA

EDUCATION SKILLS SAFETY COMMUNITY
EDUCACIÓN HABILIDADES SEGURIDAD COMUNIDAD

DATE / FECHA
October 10, 2026
10 de octubre de 2026

TIME / HORA
8:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Registration 7:30 AM

LOCATION / LUGAR
Kit Carson Park
Escondido, CA

PRICE / PRECIO
\$25 Members
(all registration employees)
\$50 Non-Members

COURSE FOCUS / ENFOQUE DEL CURSO
Palm tree inspection, climbing safety, workplace safety, proper equipment selection, climbing techniques, and aerial rescue.
Inspección de palmeras; seguridad al trepar; seguridad en el lugar de trabajo; selección del equipo adecuado; técnicas de ascenso y rescate aéreo.

TIME / HORA	SESSION / SESIÓN	INSTRUCTOR(S) / INSTRUCTOR(ES)
7:30 AM	Registration / Registro	
8:00 AM	Welcome & Introduction / Bienvenida e Introducción	Vicente Cortez & Javier Quiroz
8:15 AM	Palm Tree Climbing Safety Overview / Introducción a la Seguridad al Trepas Palmeras	Joe Wurzel, Ricardo Vazquez & Martin Morales
8:45 AM	Palm Tree Inspection / Inspección de Palmeras	Martin Morales
9:15 AM	Workplace Safety / Seguridad en el Lugar de Trabajo	Ricardo Vazquez
10:00 AM	Choosing the Right Gear for the Job / Selección del Equipo Adecuado para el Trabajo	Joe Wurzel
10:15 AM	Break / Receso	
10:30 AM	Palm Tree Climbing Techniques / Técnicas para Trepas Palmeras	Joe Wurzel, Ricardo Vazquez & Martin Morales
12:15 PM	Lunch / Almuerzo	
1:00 PM	Palm Tree Aerial Rescue / Rescate Aéreo en Palmeras	Joe Wurzel, Ricardo Vazquez & Martin Morales
2:15 PM	Questions & Answers / CEU Information / Preguntas y Respuestas / Información sobre CEUs	All Instructors / Todos los Instructores

REAL SKILLS. REAL SAFETY. REAL IMPACT.
HABILIDADES REALES. SEGURIDAD REAL. UN IMPACTO REAL.

INSTRUCTORS / INSTRUCTORES
Joe Wurzel, Vicente Cortez, Ricardo Vazquez, Martin Morales and Javier Quiroz

SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES
Gold - \$500 | Silver - \$250 | Bronze - \$100
Sponsors for lunch and refreshments are welcome - contact us for details.

REGISTER AT
PTCAOSD.WILDAPRICOT.ORG

5.5 CEUs

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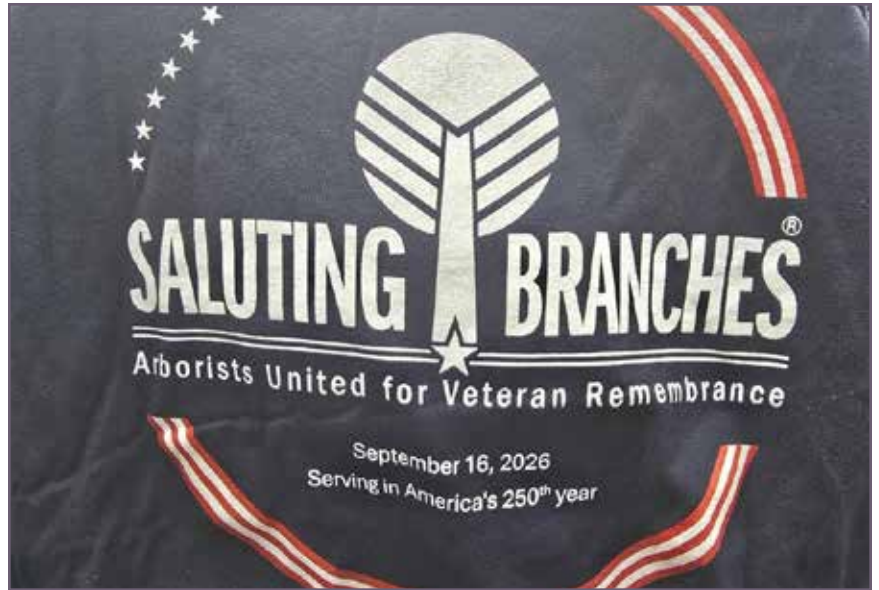
SPOKANE | KENT | PORTLAND | LIVERMORE | SACRAMENTO | NATIONAL CITY | SANTA FE SPRINGS

PTCA EVENT RECAP**Saluting Branches***By Mike Palat*

On Wednesday, September 23, a large contingent of San Diego's tree care community gathered at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery for a day of service honoring the fallen heroes who dedicated their lives to our country.

The annual Saluting Branches initiative was led by military veteran and arborist Oscar Milla of Blue Wave Tree Care. Together, 59 tree care professionals from Blue Wave Tree Care, LC Tree Service, Rancho Tree Service, the Safari Park tree crew, Utility Tree Service, and West Coast Arborists worked side by side in a shared commitment to stewardship and remembrance.

The event was one of many held at national cemeteries across the country that day, reflecting a nationwide effort to honor military sacrifice. Through their professional expertise and dedication, participants provided essential tree care while paying tribute to the heroes laid to rest at Fort Rosecrans. The day was a meaningful demonstration of community collaboration, shared purpose, and the lasting impact of service.



Altec's LR8 Series features insulating lower and upper booms to easily reach difficult areas.

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Electrical Safety Rules for Tree Trimming Professionals

By Tim Greifenkamp, CPCU



A tree crew shows up for a routine trim, and nobody expects the job to turn dangerous. From the ground, most tree work looks like landscaping. The real danger sits overhead, in wires carrying a fatal charge.

According to ESFI, 70% of workplace electrical fatalities happen in occupations that aren't electrical at all. Roofers and tree crews make up a large share of that group. Most of these workers never expected to face a live wire that day.

Most of the tree trimming electrical fatalities trace back to contact with overhead power lines. That points to one hazard, repeated across nearly every incident. Electrical safety rules, therefore, exist to break that pattern before it repeats on your site..

Why Tree Crews Face Higher Electrical Risk

Tree work puts people close to power lines by design. Branches grow into lines and wet ropes can carry a charge. A landscaper mowing a lawn rarely faces this exposure. A tree crew trimming near a line faces it on a regular basis.

That exposure shows up clearly in the data. Grounds maintenance work, which includes tree trimming, carries a fatality rate of 1.34 per 100,000 workers. The average across all occupations sits at just 0.11. Tree crews face more than ten times the average risk of electrical fatality.

Electricians train specifically to work near live conductors. Tree crews work just as close to those same lines, without that same depth of training. So, electrical safety rules give crew leads that same grounding, even without an electrical license. However, that risk carries a cost too.

The Electrical Safety Standards OSHA Requires

OSHA lays out the baseline for tree work near power lines under standard 1910.268(q). These electrical safety standards kick in the moment a job puts your crew near an overhead or underground line.

- Treat every conductor as energized, even lines that look dead or disconnected
- Keep a second qualified employee within voice contact near lines above 750 volts
- Use only insulated tools when removing branches touching a live wire
- Never rely on rubber boots or gloves as your only protection
- Contact the utility before starting work if a line's status is unclear

OSHA treats these standards as federal law. Skipping a step here is how a routine trim turns fatal.



Electrical Safety Rules to Apply Before the First Cut

This is where the standards turn into daily practice. Include these electrical safety guidelines in your daily site routine before the saw starts.

Rule No 1: Look Up Before You Park a Truck

A truck boom or a raised bucket can brush a line before anyone notices. Looking up first catches hazards a rushed setup misses. Make it the first step before any equipment moves.

Rule No 2: Call 811

Call the utility or 811 before working near an unconfirmed line. An unconfirmed line should never be treated as safe by default. A quick call to the utility or 811 confirms exactly what you're working near. That call takes minutes and can prevent a life-changing mistake.

Rule No. 3: Keep 10 ft Between Tools and Conductor

Once the line is confirmed, distance becomes your next safeguard. Keep at least 10 feet between your tools and any conductor. Ten feet feels generous until a ladder or branch closes it fast. That distance is what keeps arc flash and direct contact off your job site. Measure it on every job near a line, rather than estimating.

Rule No. 4: Treat every line as live

Distance only protects you if you assume the worst about every line. Treat every line as live until the utility confirms otherwise. A quiet line can still carry a fatal charge. Your eyes can't tell you it's safe. Only the utility, in writing, can make that call.

Rule No. 5: Brief the Crew

None of this holds up without the crew hearing it out loud. Brief the crew on line location before the first cut of the day. A five-minute briefing puts everyone on the same page before work starts. New hires need this context most, since they haven't built the instinct yet. It's a small habit that prevents a costly assumption.

Repeat these electrical safety rules and build a habit that keeps your tree trimmers safe.

Where These Rules Break Down on Real Jobs

Trained crews get caught off guard too. NIOSH tracks these incidents through its FACE program, which investigates fatal workplace injuries in detail. One Kentucky case tells you how these mistakes happen. A tree trimmer was electrocuted cutting a branch he believed was clear of the line. In California, two workers were electrocuted trimming date palms near a conductor they didn't realize was live.

These aren't isolated incidents. A peer-reviewed study of NIOSH and state FACE reports dug into landscaping and tree care deaths across the country. Electrocutions

and equipment incidents came out on top as the leading causes. One pattern stood out, where workers with less than a year of experience faced the highest risk.

That's a training issue, plain and simple. Fix it early, and you close off one of the biggest risks your crew faces on any job. Every one of these cases also became a claim. Workers' comp, an OSHA investigation, sometimes a utility dispute. They all land on the business at once. Electrical safety rules lower the odds of this happening.

FAQs

1. What are the 6 golden rules of electrical safety?

Most programs summarize these electrical safety rules as:

- Identify the hazard
- Isolate the power source
- Test before you touch
- Treat every line as live
- Keep safe clearance distances
- Use insulated tools
- Tree service crews should apply these work safety rules near any line.

2. What is an example of bad pruning?

Cutting a branch resting on a power line, without confirming it's dead first, is a common one. Topping a tree without checking overhead clearance is another. Both push a routine job into range of an energized conductor. On a rushed site, either mistake is easy to make.

3. What is the most common OSHA electrical violation?

Clearance violations top the list here. Crews get too close to energized lines, often because a line was assumed dead instead of confirmed. A few patterns show up again and again in citations:

- Working within 10 feet of a line without utility confirmation
- Treating a de-energized line as permanently safe
- Skipping the second qualified employee check near lines above 750 volts
- Each one traces back to the basic electrical safety rules that got skipped under time pressure.

4. Who is responsible for tree trimming around electrical wires?

Utilities usually trim the growth right around their own conductors. Outside that zone, the responsibility shifts to the property owner or the contractor doing the work. Before your crew starts a job near any line, confirm who owns that responsibility. It's a five-minute call that keeps you off the hook if a dispute comes up later.

WCISA Consulting Arborist Committee presents...

Factoring Wood Decay into Risk Assessment

Monday, October 26, 2026
10:00AM - 11:00AM (PST)
Via Zoom

\$20.00 - WCISA Member
\$30.00 - Non-Member

1.0 ISA CEU
wcisa.net/events

Featuring Matteo Garbelotto, Ph.D.




UPCOMING INDUSTRY WEBINAR

TREE Fund Webinar Series:

Can Mandatory Minimum Clearance Requirements Between Trees and Powerlines Successfully Reduce Injuries and Death to Workers and the Public?



TREE Fund webinars bring you the latest in tree research, directly from the scientists themselves. These one-hour webinars are free and offer 1.0 CEU (only for live broadcast) from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the Society of American Foresters (SAF), the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) and sometimes the Landscape Architecture Continuing Education System (LACES). Space is limited and pre-registration is highly recommended; in doing so, you'll receive a reminder email the day before the broadcast.

On Tuesday, November 10, Dr. Richard Hauer will present "Connecting and Creating Municipal Forestry Bridges to Build Urban Forest Resources."

This webinar is part of the TREE Fund's educational series, offering professionals insights into urban forestry and the opportunity to earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

UPCOMING INDUSTRY WEBINAR

What Continuous Driver Monitoring Can Catch Presented by HUB ArborFleet

Every day a risky driver stays on the road without your knowing, your exposure grows. Continuous monitoring gives you a live view of every driver's motor vehicle record and license status across all 50 states, so you can act on risk the moment it appears. This one-hour session shows you how it works and what it can do for your fleet.

The session will focus on how continuous driver monitoring can help arbor businesses gain greater visibility into driver risk before it turns into a claim. We'll also walk attendees through the technology itself and discuss how fleet operators can incorporate continuous monitoring into their broader fleet safety and risk management strategy.

What to expect:

- An overview of the Ascend Captive
- A live walkthrough of the driver monitoring platform
- How alerts work and what triggers them
- Open Q&A with the HUB ArborFleet and SambaSafety team

What continuous monitoring does for your fleet:

- See a new violation or a license change the day it is reported, across all 50 states, so you can act before a small issue becomes a claim.
- Track every driver's record as it updates automatically, so a suspended license surfaces the day it happens rather than at the next annual pull.
- Spend time on the drivers who need attention. Monitoring runs in the background and surfaces only the alerts that matter.
- Build a documented safety record. If a claim becomes a legal question, that record shows what you knew and the action you took.

Early action on driver risk leads to fewer crashes and fewer claims over time. That protects your drivers and your bottom line.

Join us online on Wednesday, October 28, from 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST. Please register online at:

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1258741160005384539>

