

City of South San Francisco
Human Resources Department

Groundsperson
Class Description

Definition

Under close supervision, performs unskilled and semi-skilled tasks in the maintenance of park grounds, equipment, street medians, trees, and other landscaped areas; supports the work of tree trimmers; assists in all aspects of arbor care by spotting for the trimmer; retrieves, loads, and cleans up debris; spreads chips, planting, and tree materials; transports items to and from the worksite; assists in planting and caring for trees and shrubbery; and does related work as required.

Distinguishing Characteristics

This is the experienced classification that serves as an assistant to the tree trimmer classification and provides assistance in rescue operations. The higher-level classifications perform the more specialized, skilled, and difficult types of park maintenance and tree trimming work. This classification is also distinguished from the higher-level classification in that latter performs aerial tree trimming activities and is certified to perform rescue operations.

Typical and Important Duties

1. Assists with tree trimming by spotting; using ropes, saddle, and other equipment; identifies and adjusts work for hazards.
2. Picks up trimmings and debris; disposes by using a chipper or loads directly onto a truck.
3. Operates and maintains a variety of hand and power equipment, such as chainsaws, brush chippers, stump grinders, augers, pole saws, power saw, and log splitters.
4. Retrieves and disposes of diseased, dead, or excess limbs and branches that have been removed from trees.
5. Sets up, secures, and maintains job site traffic control.
6. Maintains City's parks and streets by pruning, planting, watering, removing, weeding, fertilizing, and caring for plants, shrubs, and trees.
7. Applies insecticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.
8. Climbs and works at heights, as required.
9. Performs aerial rescues.
10. May perform tree-trimming work on a training or relief basis.
11. Performs related duties and responsibilities as assigned.

Job-related Qualifications

Knowledge of:

- Names, characteristics, growth requirements, and care of the more common types of ornamental and shade trees and shrubs in the community.
- Materials, equipment, and methods used in the care, trimming, and removal of trees and used in parks and landscape maintenance.

- Arboricultural knots, ropes, and rigging techniques, including bracing and cabling trees, and line clearances.
- Safe work practices.
- Proper traffic control practices, procedures, rules, and regulations.
- Vehicles and equipment and their uses.

Ability to:

- Learn and understand names, characteristics, growth requirements, and care of the more common types of ornamental and shade trees and shrubs in the community.
- Learn and apply climbing techniques and tree trimming practices.
- Use ropes, spurs, and other tree trimming equipment.
- Identify high voltage wires and other electrical conductors, and work in close proximity to them.
- Climb and work at extreme heights; assist in performing aerial rescues, when necessary.
- Work in traffic situations.
- Effectively and safely perform a variety of semi-skilled and unskilled park maintenance tasks, including chopping, digging out, and removing roots and stumps.
- Safely apply chemicals.
- Communicate effectively in writing, orally, and with others to assimilate, understand, and convey information, in a manner consistent with job functions.
- Follow written and verbal instructions.
- Use a variety of hand and power tools, and operate light motorized equipment.
- Operate a variety of vehicles, such as chipper trucks, dump trucks, front loaders, water tankers, and aerial lift trucks, and tow a trailer.
- Represent the City, the department, or organizational unit effectively in contacts with representatives of other agencies, City departments, and the public.
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with those contracted in the course of the work.
- Use initiative and judgment within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- Take a proactive approach to customer service issues.
- Make process improvement changes to streamline procedures.
- Work independently; organize own work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments with a minimum of direction.
- Communicate clearly and concisely both orally and in writing.
- Work in a safe manner, following City safety practices and procedures.
- Understand and comply with City and departmental rules and regulations.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive information.

Skill in:

- Driving a variety of vehicles safely.

Experience and Training

Any combination of experience and training that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities would be qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities would be:

Experience:

One year of experience in parks and landscape maintenance work, with additional experience assisting in pruning, trimming, and maintaining trees.

Training:

Equivalent to graduation from high school.

Licenses and Certificates

All licenses and certificates must be maintained as a condition of employment.

- Possession of, or ability to obtain, an appropriate, valid California driver's license and a satisfactory driving record.
- Possession of, or ability to obtain an ACRT line clearance/rescue certification or equivalent within the first 12 months of employment.
- Possession of, or ability to obtain, an American Red Cross First Aid/CPR certification.

Special Requirements

Essential duties require the following physical skills and work environment:

Physical Skills:

Able to sit, stand, walk, kneel, crouch, stoop, squat, crawl, twist, and climb; lift and carry 75 pounds; dexterity to drive trucks and large vehicles; distinguish among various colors; distinguish various computer generated auditory signals; use common hand tools; vision to read printed materials, a computer screen, and to test equipment in varied field settings; hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone.

Work Environment:

Work in a shop and field setting; exposure to inclement weather, cold, heat, noise, outdoors, dust, dirt, vibration, chemicals, traffic, traffic hazards, confining workspace, mechanical hazards, electrical hazards, and explosive hazards.

Ability to:

Travel to different sites and locations; drive safely to different sites and locations; maintain a safe driving record; maintain a clean and neat appearance; work protracted and irregular hours; respond to a pager; take 24-hour call and stand-by; available for evening meetings; available for unusual hours in emergencies.

Additional Information:

- Approved: March 2001
- Revised Date: December 2001, January 2003, June 2003, March 2019, February 2025

- Former Titles:
- Abolished:
- Bargaining Unit: AFSCME
- DOT: Yes
- Status: Classified/Non-exempt
- Job Code: A505