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“For Safety’s Sake - Do Something”

Aerial Work Platform Safety

About 26 construction workers die each year from using aerial lifts. More than half of the deaths involve boom-supported lifts, such as bucket trucks and cherry pickers; most of the other deaths involve scissor lifts. Electrocutions, falls, and tip-overs cause most of the deaths. An aerial lift is any aerial device used to elevate workers to job sites above the ground including extensible boom platforms, aerial ladders, articulating boom platforms and vertical towers. A Scissors lift is a mobile supported scaffold which can be motorized or non-motorized, is portable, and caster or wheel-mounted.

OSHA requires aerial lift and scissor lift training, including:

- The nature of any lift hazards, electrical hazards, fall hazards and falling object hazards in the work area.
- The correct procedures for dealing with electrical hazards and for erecting, maintaining and disassembling the fall protection systems and falling object protection systems being used.
- The correct procedures for moving, operating, repairing, inspecting and maintaining the type of lift in question.
- The proper use of the lift, and proper handling of any materials in the lift.
- The maximum intended load and the load-carrying capacity of the lift used.
- Any additional requirements set by the manufacturer.

To maintain a safe work environment, all operators must demonstrate that they understand how to use the lift and must be retrained if they do not demonstrate the skill or understanding needed for safe operating procedures. A pre-start inspection of the lift must be performed before each use and an inspection of the surrounding work site in which the lift will be utilized. A work site inspection of the work area must be performed in order to properly evaluate the surface where the lift will be used, hazards that can cause failure, weather conditions that can affect operation, and any other requirements of the manufacturer. Use of equipment for performing work other than what it was intended or designed for can even be fatal.

Employees should always stand firmly on the floor of the lift. They should not sit or climb on the basket or guardrails or use planks, ladders or other items to attain a higher work position

Common hazards include:

- Chain gates or slide gates not intact at access areas exposing operators to fall hazards
- Overloading the basket with personnel or materials in the basket
- Using the lift to suspend equipment or materials or to pull or raise objects, acting as a crane
- Operators not tied off in Articulated Booms at all times
- Operators moving the lifts while at high elevations thus causing the machine to tip over and be unstable
- Operating in close proximity to overhead lines
- Placing the lift in an area where it is able to tip or become unstable
- Employees that are tied off are attaching lanyards to the guardrails of the lifts and not to approved anchorage points