

TOOLBOX TALK

Aerial and Scissor Lift Safety

WHY THIS MATTERS

An average of 26 construction workers die each year from aerial lift accidents (CPWR). The leading causes are falls, electrocutions, and tip-overs. Around 300-400 workers are injured annually operating lifts (CDC). Every incident is preventable with proper training.

26

Average deaths per year from aerial lifts (CPWR)

10 ft

Min. distance from power lines (OSHA)

44%

Of boom lift deaths from electrocution (BLS)

5 Rules for Aerial and Scissor Lift Safety

Every lift operator must follow these rules before and during operation:

1**INSPECT BEFORE EVERY USE**

Check controls, guardrails, hydraulics, tires, battery, outriggers, and safety devices. Test all functions at ground level first. Never operate a defective lift — tag it out.

2**WEAR FALL PROTECTION**

On boom lifts: wear a full-body harness with lanyard attached to the anchor point inside the basket. On scissor lifts: guardrails are required; harness if guardrails are removed.

3**MAINTAIN SAFE DISTANCES**

Stay at least 10 feet from power lines at all times. Non-electrical workers must never approach energized lines. Assume all lines are live.

4**WORK ON STABLE GROUND**

Set up lifts on firm, level surfaces only. Use outriggers when required. Never drive a scissor lift with the platform elevated on uneven ground.

5**NEVER EXCEED LOAD LIMITS**

Know the rated capacity and never overload the platform. Account for workers, tools, and materials. Do not use planks or ladders to extend reach.

Before You Start — Quick Checklist

- Has the pre-operation inspection been completed?
- Are all guardrails in place and secure?
- Is the ground firm, level, and free of hazards?
- Are overhead power lines at least 10 feet away?
- Is fall protection equipment worn and attached?
- Is the operator trained and certified for this lift type?

Pre-Operation Inspection — Check Every Time

Controls: Test all operating controls at ground level. Verify upper and lower controls function properly. Check emergency stop.

Guardrails: Ensure all guardrails, chains, and access gates are secure and undamaged. Mid-rails and toe boards must be in place.

Hydraulics: Check for leaks, unusual noises, and smooth operation of all lift and drive functions.

Tires/Wheels: Inspect tires for cuts, low pressure, or damage. Check wheel nuts. Verify brakes hold on slopes.

Ground: Survey the work area for holes, slopes, drop-offs, debris, and overhead obstructions before positioning.

Outriggers: If equipped, deploy all outriggers fully on solid ground before elevating. Never operate without them.

Common Mistakes That Kill on Lifts

- ✗ Not wearing a harness on a boom lift — ejection from the basket is the #1 cause of boom lift deaths
- ✗ Driving a scissor lift with the platform raised on rough or sloped terrain — tip-overs are fatal
- ✗ Working too close to power lines — electrocution can occur without direct contact at high voltages
- ✗ Standing on guardrails or using ladders inside the basket to gain extra height
- ✗ Overloading the platform or allowing unauthorized, untrained workers to operate the lift

Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ Always close the access gate before elevating — an open gate is an invitation to fall
- ✓ Keep both feet firmly on the platform floor at all times — never sit on or climb over guardrails
- ✓ Lower the platform fully before driving a scissor lift to any new position
- ✓ Watch for changing weather — wind over 28 mph can tip a boom lift; follow manufacturer limits
- ✓ Establish a ground spotter when working near traffic, pedestrians, or overhead obstructions

Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. What types of aerial lifts are we using on this project?
2. Are there any overhead power lines near our work area?
3. When was the last time our lifts were professionally inspected?
4. Does every operator have current training and certification?
5. Do we have a rescue plan if someone is trapped in a lift?

TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Project: _____

Location: _____

Attendance sheet attached: [] Yes