



Secondary Guarding Systems of Aerial Boom Lifts

Questions to Ask Aerial Lift Rental and Sales Teams

One of the hazards faced by users of boom lifts is being crushed or pinned against another structure while elevated. Depending on the incident, the user may be trapped without access to the controls or pressed against a motion control. Both of these types of caught-between incidents create their unique dangers.

Over the past ten years, many manufacturers have been releasing *Secondary Guarding Systems* to help prevent both of these types of incidents. Some of the newer systems include [pressure-sensitive bars or “whiskers”](#) that extend from the basket and cut engine power if triggered, [magnetic wires](#) or [sensor bars](#) that stop the lift and alert ground crews if they are touched by users, [secondary “lift enable” switches](#) designed to keep operators’ limbs in the basket while moving, protective structures designed to prevent user or control panel impacts, and automated reversal systems that engage if any faults are detected. As of 2020, there are many options, but only a few of them are standard on some manufacturers’ new lifts. Below are some questions to ask your aerial lift rental or sales teams before any future purchases or rentals:

- Are your lifts equipped with any types of protective structures for operators or control panels?
These can physically block the user or directional controls of a lift from an overhead hazard.
- Are control panels blocked from accidental activation, or do they have a secondary switch?
Many panels are now partially covered in addition to having pedal-controlled activation.
- Do your lifts come equipped with any contact-based alarms or engine cutoffs?
Some manufacturers include these systems as standard issue on all new lifts.
- Can you provide any unit-specific classroom or field training on your lifts?
Operator awareness and training are the first and last lines of defense.

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