



Aerial Lifts

Aerial lifts are vehicle-mounted devices, such as cherry-pickers, used to elevate workers. The major causes of fatalities involving this equipment are falls, electrocutions, collapses or tip-overs. Powered or manually operated, aerial lifts have replaced ladders and scaffolding on job sites due to their mobility and flexibility.

Employers and lift operators should be careful to follow proper procedures and maintain equipment, as well as inspect the work site for hazards such as unstable surfaces, debris, power lines, severe weather conditions or the presence of other workers in the lift area.

Types of Aerial Lifts

- **Boom lifts:** Buckets on the end of extendable or jointed arms
- **Scissor lifts:** Flat platforms that travel straight up and down
- **Personnel lifts:** Single-user, vertical travel buckets

Aerial Lift Hazards

- Falls from elevated levels
- Being struck by objects falling from elevated levels
- Tip-overs or structural failures (collapses)
- Electric shock (electrocutions)
- Ejection from the lift platform
- Contact with objects, with ceilings and other overhead objects

Safe Work Practices

- Ensure aerial lift operators are trained properly in safe use of the equipment.
- Maintain and operate aerial lifts in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Document a pre-start inspection following manufacturer pre-operation inspection protocols prior to using the lift to ensure the lift and all its components are in safe operating condition.
- Never override hydraulic, mechanical or electrical safety devices.
- Do not allow workers to position themselves between overhead hazards (such as joists and beams) and the rails of the basket. Movement of the lift could crush workers.
- Maintain a minimum clearance of at least 10 feet away from the nearest overhead lines.
- Treat power lines, wires and other conductors as energized, even if they are down or appear to be insulated.
- Use a body harness or restraining belt with a lanyard attached to the boom or basket to prevent workers from being ejected or pulled from the basket.
- Set brake and use wheel chocks on an incline.
- Use outriggers, if provided.
- Do not exceed the load limits of the equipment. Allow for the combined weight of the worker, tools and materials.

Source: OSHA Aerial Lifts Fact Sheet

Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

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