

Using Aerial Lifts

The major causes of injuries and fatalities involving aerial lifts are falls, electrocutions, and collapses or tip-overs. Aerial devices include boom-supported aerial platforms, such as cherry pickers or bucket trucks, aerial ladders and vertical towers (OSHA regulates scissor lifts as mobile scaffolds, not as aerial devices). Safe work practices for aerial lifts include:

- Ensure that workers who operate aerial lifts are properly trained in the safe use of the equipment. Test the controls and inspect the aerial lift before use each day. Make sure that all controls are clearly marked as to their function.
- Never override hydraulic, mechanical or electrical safety devices. Maintain and operate aerial lifts according to the manufacturer's instructions. Always stand firmly on the basket floor. Do not sit or climb on the edge or rails of the basket. Never use planks, boxes or other items inside the basket to extend your reach.
- Ensure that all wheels of an elevated lift are on a solid base. Use outriggers, if provided. Set the brakes and use wheel chocks when on an incline. Do not exceed the load limits of the equipment. Allow for the combined weight of the worker(s), tools and materials.
- De-energize and lockout/tagout aerial lifts before performing any maintenance or repairs.

Working near Power Lines

Maintain a minimum clearance of at least 10 feet away from the nearest overhead line. In addition, any conductive object that can be contacted must be maintained at least 10 feet from overhead lines. Conductive objects could be wires, transformers, ducts, pipes or other equipment. Always treat overhead lines as energized, even if they are down or appear to be insulated. (Qualified power line and communications workers and qualified line-clearance tree trimmers are trained to work closer than 10 feet to a power line. See OSHA's Tree Trimming Fact Sheet and Quick Card.) Never lose awareness of the overhead hazard.

Struck-by, Crushed-by, or Caught-in Hazards

Establish and clearly mark a danger zone around the aerial lift support vehicle. Never move the equipment with workers in the elevated platform unless the equipment has been specifically designed for this type of operation. Do not allow workers to position themselves between overhead hazards, such as joists and beams, and the rails of the basket. If the basket moves, the worker(s) could become trapped and crushed between the rails and the overhead object.

Fall Protection

Do not allow workers to belt off to an adjacent pole, structure or equipment while working from an aerial lift. Use a body harness or positioning device with a lanyard attached to the boom or basket to prevent the worker from being ejected or pulled from the basket.