

TOOLBOX TALK #40

AERIAL LIFTS

If used right an aerial lift can prevent falls and reduce the risks for back, neck and shoulder injuries caused by working at or above shoulder level by positioning you where you need to work. But there are different types of aerial lifts including scissor lifts, bucket trucks and cherry pickers. The “down” lever on one can be the “up” lever on another model.



Before you use the lift ...

1. **Get trained up.** Your employer must make sure every authorized lift operator is trained by a **qualified person** experienced with the model of aerial lift being used. Once trained, follow manufacturer’s instructions. (A qualified person is someone who by knowledge, training and experience has successfully demonstrated their ability to resolve problems related to the project.)
2. **Wear a full body harness.** If your lift is struck by another vehicle, you can be thrown from the lift. Using proper fall protection will keep you from a serious or fatal fall. You must use a lanyard attached to an engineered anchor in the basket or on the boom. Do not attach it to the guardrail.
3. **Check for overhead powerlines.** Do a pre-job walk-thru to look for powerlines. Ask your supervisor if the electrical wires or powerlines have been de-energized. Unless you are a qualified electrical worker, stay a minimum of 10 feet away from all powerlines.

Before operating an aerial lift ...

- Check operating and emergency controls
- Make sure the base controls are working so that someone on the ground can lower the lift if you are unable to work the controls
- Look for potential hazards such as potholes, bumps, or debris
- Set outriggers, brakes and wheel chocks – even if on a level surface.

While operating an aerial lift ...

- Always wear full fall protection
- Always close lift-platform chains or doors, and check guardrails
- Do not climb on or lean over guardrails
- Do not exceed load limits

If not used right, the results can be deadly. Major causes of death are electrocutions, falls and tip-overs. Construction workers die each year while using aerial lifts. Be smart. Don’t let it happen to you.