

TOOLBOX TALK #44

WORKER FALLS FROM LIFT WHILE TREE TRIMMING

A 55-year-old boom lift operator died after he fell from the basket of an elevated lift. On the day of the incident, the operator was part of a three-person crew assigned to remove trees at a residence.

The plan was for the operator and a co-worker to first work in the elevated lift to limb trees with chainsaws. The company owner had brought fall protection but did not instruct the workers to wear it in the basket. The operator elevated the lift about 20 feet off the ground so the workers could reach the lower limbs of a tree.

They decided to bring the cut branches into the basket to prevent them from damaging the resident's shed and a nearby garage. To move the branches into the basket, the operator – who was not wearing fall protection – opened the side access gate. As he leaned forward through the gate, he fell from the basket to the roof of the shed. Emergency responders airlifted the operator to a local hospital, where he died two days later from injuries to the head and neck.

To help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Train workers on how to safely operate and work in boom lifts.
- Ensure workers in boom lifts wear personal fall protection when exposed to fall hazards.
- Develop an incident prevention program that describes the hazards associated with tree trimming/removal and how to control them.
- Conduct a job hazard analysis before starting a new job.

