

Aerial Lift – Field Training

Aerial lifts are an important tool to reach elevated work areas and they provide a good solid work platform. We use them often to help with building bridges. Unfortunately, these lifts come with many hazards and OSHA requirements.

Aerial lifts, manlifts, scissor lifts, bucket trucks and cherry pickers all fall under the same regulations that are found in OSHA 1926.453.

Aerial lift accidents are typically associated with workers falling out of the lift, lifts tipping over, electrocution, and employees having pinch point injuries. Any of these are very serious.

It is extremely important to check the manufacturer's operator manual for load and operation requirements. This must be done before you use an aerial lift. Boom angles, load limits, and other important information will be in the manual and the recommendations must be followed.

Brakes must be set and outriggers in place before the boom is lifted for use.

Our lifts are not designed to be moved with a person in the basket. At no time will we move our lifts until the booms are lowered and the basket is free of workers.

Aerial lifts should be set up on the most level, smooth and solid surface possible. Setting up on soft dirt or unstable surfaces can result in a lift turning over. When the boom is extended and lifted higher the risks go up substantially.

All doors, gates and openings in the man basket must be closed. Guardrails are required by OSHA on lifts.

Inspecting your lift before you use it is very important. Look for leaks of hydraulic fluid or listen for air leaks before raising. A leak could cause sudden movement in the boom.

OSHA 1926.453(a)(2) Aerial lifts cannot be modified unless the modification is approved in writing by the manufacturer.

OSHA 1926.453(a)(2) requires lift operators to ensure all controls operate properly every day before use.

OSHA 1926.453(b)(2)(ii) requires operators to be trained before operating an aerial lift. Only authorized persons shall operate an aerial lift.

OSHA 1926.453(b)(2)(III) Belting off to an adjacent pole, structure, or equipment while working from an aerial lift shall not be permitted.

OSHA 1926.453(b)(2)(iv) Employees shall always stand firmly on the floor of the basket and shall not sit or climb on the edge of the basket or use planks, ladders, or other devices for a position.

OSHA 1926.453(b)(2)(v) A fall protection harness with lanyard attached to the boom or basket will be worn at all times while working in an aerial lift. In short, if you are in the basket, you must be tied off. Don't get in the basket unless you immediately secure your lanyard.

OSHA 1926.453(b)(2)(xii) Before moving an aerial lift, the boom will be inspected to see that it is properly cradled, and outriggers are completely in and stowed.

Operators / users of aerial lifts must be trained and qualified before they are allowed to operate a lift.

Lifts are required to have the operator's manual with them when on the jobsite.

The information found above is only a small part of the training required to operate an aerial lift. Training requires hands-on use and operation of the controls. Only after an employee demonstrates that he has the knowledge and ability to operate the lift safely will he be certified as an Aerial Lift Operator.

All training must be certified by a member of the safety department or a project superintendent.