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AERIAL LIFT SAFETY

To keep safe, you must be able to recognize aerial lift hazards.

- Aerial lift hazards include falls, tip-overs, contact with power lines, and falling objects.
- Because of these hazards, only trained and authorized employees may operate lifts.
- To prevent accidents, employees who work on aerial lifts must be familiar with:
    - Warnings, cautions, or restrictions;
    - Operating and maintenance manuals;
    - Rated workload of equipment and maximum platform height; and
    - How to set up equipment and use safety features correctly.

Aerial lifts are equipped with various safety features to protect you.

- Driving interlocks prevent equipment from being moved unless the platform is adjusted to meet stability requirements.
- Outrigger interlocks prevent the lift platform from being raised above the height at which an outrigger, stabilizer, or extendable axle can maintain stability. Outrigger interlocks also prevent the outrigger from being retracted while the platform is above a specified height.
- Tilt interlocks prevent aerial lifts from being raised when the base of the unit is not on level ground and exceeds a certain angle.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires other safety features, including:
    - Skid-resistant stepping, standing, and working surfaces;
    - Guardrails between 38 and 45 inches high to prevent falls;
    - Attachment points for a full-body harness and lanyard for each person on the lift;
    - Controls plainly marked as to their function;
    - Upper and lower controls for lifts with articulating or extendable booms; and
    - Electrical insulation if the lift is operated near power lines.

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Aerial lifts must be inspected daily to ensure safety.

- Look for defects such as cracked welds, hydraulic leaks, damaged control cables, loose wire connections, and tire damage.
- Also check electrically insulated items to ensure they are present and in good condition.
- Perform a control check to ensure operating controls are functioning correctly.
- Get any potentially unsafe items discovered through inspection examined by a qualified service person and corrected before the lift is operated.
- After inspecting the equipment, inspect the immediate work area for hazards that could cause tip-overs, falls, or electrocution.

Following safe work practices is one of the best ways to prevent accidents.

- Maintain and operate aerial lifts according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Check for overhead power lines and keep a minimum of 10 feet away from them while working.
- Make sure the lift is positioned on a level and solid surface.
- Position outriggers or stabilizers correctly, and place wheel chocks under tires.
- Wear a personal fall arrest system attached correctly to the lift. Belting off to an adjacent pole, structure, or equipment is not permitted.
- Don't overload the lift—the load capacity should be on an attached plaque.
- Make sure ropes, electric cords, and hoses don't get tangled with the lift when the platform is elevated, lowered, or moved.
- Stand firmly on the floor of the lift, keeping the soles of your shoes flat on the platform.
- Don't sit or climb on lift guardrails, and never use a ladder on a lift to gain more height.
- Never use a plank to bridge a gap between the lift and a structure or work surface.
- Before lowering the lift, make sure the area under the platform is clear.
- Before moving an aerial lift for travel, inspect the boom to see that it is properly cradled and outriggers are in stowed position (except for equipment that is specifically designed and certified to operate with a person in the platform).

Employees working below lifts must also follow safe work practices.

- Warn employees up on the lift if they are getting too close to power lines.
- Wear a hard hat, watch out for falling objects, and stand clear when the lift is lowered.
- Know what to do if the lift operator is injured and can't operate controls.