Aerial Lifts

Week Number 33 (August 13 - 19) 2017 Edition

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this safety talk, participants will be able to:
• *Identify the hazards associated with working on or around an aerial lift*
• *Identify ways to safely work on or around an aerial lift*

The major causes of death from aerial and scissor lifts are falls, electrocutions, collapses and tip-overs; of these fatalities, one quarter are electricians. It's important to remember that you can be injured or killed even if you aren't working on the lift but simply in the area of the lift. Be aware that if an aerial lift tips over or collapses it could land on you and that the operator may not be able to see you and doesn't realize that you're in the area.

The risk of death from electrocution and falls can be reduced by using the correct PPE for your jobsite. When using an aerial lift around power lines be sure to wear a Class E insulated hard hat, rubber gloves and coverings and any other protective clothing that the job may require. In these settings, it's best to use insulated boom buckets and always ground the lift. If this isn't possible, you should treat all overhead power lines as energized and stay at least 10 feet away. To protect yourself from falls when working from the platform, wear a body harness. Never attach your lanyard to adjacent poles, structures or equipment. Always be sure the gate of the lift is closed, and the guardrail system is in good condition. You should always stand on the floor of the lift, never sit or stand on the railing system of the basket.

You should be sure that the aerial lift has been inspected before each use. This inspection should include any obvious damage like cracked welds, testing the controls and checking that the controls are clearly labeled. Any issues with the lift must be reported to your supervisor before you use the lift. Any lift that has been involved in an incident, like a tip-over or collision must not be used until it has passed a formal inspection.

When operating an aerial lift NEVER operate one that you haven't been formally trained to use. Other things to remember when safely operating an aerial lift:
• Never tamper or modify the controls or safety devices; for example, strapping a deadman switch in the closed position.
• Always follow the manufacturers' load capacity limits, extension and terrain recommendations. When calculating the load, remember to include the combined weight of workers, tools and materials.
• Don't operate an aerial lift in high winds above those recommended by the manufacturer.
• Don't move the lift when the boom is elevated and carrying people, unless this is allowed by the manufacturer's instructions.
• If driving the lift on a grade, be sure to use the lowest speed setting or gearing.
• Be sure that there is clearance in all directions before using any machine functions. Never raise the lift unless you can see that the area above is clear, especially of wires.
• Upon reaching the work location, be sure
  - The wheels are chocked on sloped surfaces
  - The controls are locked out, if possible
  - The outriggers are set on pads or a solid, level surface and the brakes are set
  - Set up work zone warnings, like cones and signs to warn others working in the area.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• What are the major causes of fatalities related to aerial lift use?

• What are ways to keep safe from electrocution while using a lift?

• You get in a lift at the beginning of your shift; the labeling on the controls is gone. What should you do?

• When the lift has reached its work area, what should be done to the lift?