

Aerial Lifts

Aerial forklifts are able to accommodate numerous tasks involving high and hard reaching places. Often utilized to perform daily repair in structures with elevated ceilings, prune tree branches, hoist heavy shelving units or fix phone lines. A ladder could also be used for some of the aforementioned projects, although aerial hoists offer more security and stability when properly used.

There are a handful of different models of aerial lifts available, each being able to perform moderately different jobs. Painters will often use a scissor lift platform, which is able to be used to reach the 2nd story of buildings. The scissor aerial lifts use criss-cross braces to stretch out and enlarge upwards. There is a platform attached to the top of the braces that rises simultaneously as the criss-cross braces elevate.

Cherry pickers and bucket trucks are another version of the aerial lift. Typically, they possess a bucket at the end of an extended arm and as the arm unfolds, the attached bucket lift rises. Platform lifts use a pronged arm that rises upwards as the handle is moved. Boom lifts have a hydraulic arm which extends outward and lifts the platform. All of these aerial platform lifts require special training to operate.

Through the Occupational Safety & Health Association, also called OSHA, training programs are on hand to help ensure the employees meet occupational standards for safety, machine operation, inspection and repair and machine weight capacities. Employees receive qualifications upon completion of the classes and only OSHA licensed personnel should drive aerial hoists. The Occupational Safety & Health Organization has established guidelines to maintain safety and prevent injury when using aerial lift trucks. Common sense rules such as not utilizing this machine to give rides and ensuring all tires on aerial lifts are braced so as to prevent machine tipping are mentioned within the rules.

Sadly, statistics show that more than 20 operators die each year when working with aerial hoists and 8% of those are commercial painters. The majority of these accidents are due to improper tire bracing and the hoist falling over; therefore some of these deaths were preventable. Operators should make certain that all wheels are locked and braces as a critical safety precaution to stop the instrument from toppling over.

Additional guidelines include marking the surrounding area of the machine in a visible manner to protect passers-by and to ensure they do not approach too close to the operating machine. It is vital to ensure that there are also 10 feet of clearance among any utility cables and the aerial hoist. Operators of this apparatus are also highly recommended to always wear the proper safety harness while up in the air.