Aerial and Scissor Lifts – Landscaping Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Aerial and scissor lifts are essential tools in landscaping, particularly for tasks such as tree trimming, installing lighting, and accessing hard-to-reach areas. Their use comes with significant risks that must be managed through proper training, equipment maintenance, and adherence to safety protocols.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

The risks and dangers associated with using aerial and scissor lifts in landscaping are varied and can be severe.

Specific Risks

1. **Falls**
    - **Inadequate Fall Protection:** Lack of proper fall protection, such as harnesses and guardrails, can result in serious injuries or fatalities if a worker falls from a lift.
    - **Overreaching:** Workers may be tempted to overreach from the platform.
1. **Tip-Overs**
    - **Uneven Terrain:** Landscaping often involves working on uneven ground, which can cause lifts to tip over if not properly positioned.
    - **High Winds:** Operating lifts in windy conditions can destabilize the equipment, leading to tip-overs.
1. **Electrocution**
    - **Proximity to Power Lines:** Aerial lifts used near power lines pose a risk of electrocution if the lift comes into contact with or gets too close to live electrical wires.
1. **Equipment Malfunctions**
    - **Mechanical Failures:** Poorly maintained lifts can suffer from mechanical failures.
    - **Inadequate Inspections:** Failure to conduct regular inspections and maintenance.
1. **Struck-by Hazards**

- **Falling Objects:** Tools or materials can fall from the lift platform, posing a risk to workers below.
- **Swing Radius:** The movement of aerial lifts can create a swing radius that poses a risk of collision with nearby structures or workers.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Pre-Operational Safety Checks

1. **Inspect the Equipment**
   - Conduct a thorough pre-use inspection of the lift, checking for any signs of damage or wear. Pay special attention to the hydraulic system, tires, controls, and safety devices such as guardrails and harness attachment points.
   - Ensure that the lift is on a level surface and that the ground is stable.
1. **Check the Surroundings**
   - Survey the area for potential hazards, such as power lines, uneven terrain, or obstacles that could interfere with the lift’s operation.
   - Identify and mark any overhead obstructions that could come into contact with the lift.

During Operation

1. **Use Proper PPE**
   - Always wear a full-body harness with a lanyard attached to the lift’s designated anchor point.
   - Wear a hard hat to protect against falling objects, as well as gloves and appropriate footwear.
1. **Follow Safe Operating Procedures**
   - **Do Not Overreach:** Keep both feet firmly on the platform and avoid leaning over the guardrails.
   - **Maintain Stability:** Keep the lift platform level at all times. If working on a slope, use the lift’s leveling functions or reposition to a more stable area.
   - **Avoid High Winds:** Do not operate the lift in windy conditions.
1. **Communication**
   - Maintain clear communication with ground workers, using hand signals or radios.
   - Have a designated spotter on the ground to help guide the lift operator and monitor for hazards.

Post-Operational Procedures

1. **Lower the Lift Safely**
   - Ensure that the lift is fully lowered before exiting. Never jump from the platform to the ground.
1. **Secure the Lift**
   - Once the job is complete, secure the lift by turning off the power, remove the keys, and perform a final inspection to ensure everything is in good condition.
1. **Review and Report**
   - After each use, review the operation with the team to identify any issues

or areas for improvement.

FINAL WORD

Aerial and scissor lifts require strict adherence to safety protocols to prevent accidents. By understanding the risks, conducting thorough inspections, and following best practices, you can protect yourself and your coworkers from potential hazards.