

Elevated Work Platforms: Scissor Lifts, Boom Lifts and Platform Hazards Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Working up high on a lift or platform means a fall from even a modest height can end a career or a life. These machines make hard jobs possible, but they demand your full attention every single time you use them.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Scissor lifts and boom lifts look stable and simply to operate. That's part of what makes them dangerous workers get comfortable and start cutting corners.

Struck by Objects or Overhead Hazards

- Power lines above the work area are a leading cause of electrocution on lifts
- Unsecured tools or materials falling from the platform can hit people below
- Working near moving vehicles or equipment without a spotter

Falls From the Platform

- Leaning over the guardrail to reach something just out of range
- Standing on the mid-rail or a bucket to gain extra height
- Not wearing or clipping in a fall arrest harness when required

Tip-Overs Elevating a lift on uneven ground, driving over a soft patch, or extending a boom beyond its rated angle can cause the whole machine to tip. These incidents happen fast and they are rarely survivable.

Mechanical Failure Using a lift that hasn't been inspected, has a known defect, or is past its maintenance date puts you at the mercy of whatever gives out first. Pre-use inspections exist for exactly this reason.

Untrained Operators Every model of lift is different. Controls, weight limits, and safe operating angles vary. Operating equipment you haven't been trained on – even if you've used a similar machine – is a serious risk.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Safe work at height starts on the ground, before you ever leave it.

Inspect Before You Operate

- Complete a pre-use inspection every time – check controls, guardrails, wheels, fluid levels, and the harness anchor point
- If anything is worn, damaged, or missing, tag the machine out of service and report it before using it
- Never assume the last person checked it – make it your habit, every shift

Know the Ground Before You Go Up Before you raise the platform, look at what's underneath you. Is the ground firm and level? Are there floor grates, soft patches, drains, or slopes nearby? A surface that looks solid can give way under the weight of a loaded lift. If you're not sure, don't go up until someone confirms it's safe.

Wear and Clip in Your Harness When a harness is required, wearing it isn't enough – you must clip the lanyard to the anchor point inside the platform. An unclipped harness does nothing. Make this a non-negotiable habit. If your harness doesn't fit properly or the anchor point looks worn or damaged, stop and get it sorted before you go up.

Stay Inside the Rails – Always

- Never lean out over the guardrail to extend your reach – reposition the lift instead
- Never stand on the mid-rail, a bucket, or any other object to gain extra height

If you can't reach from inside the platform safely, come down and move the machine

Scan for Overhead Hazards Before you raise the platform, look up. Check for power lines, pipes, sprinkler heads, beams, and any other overhead obstruction. Know the clearance you need and maintain it throughout the job. If you're unsure of clearance distance, stop and ask.

Get Clear If Something Goes Wrong

- If the platform stops responding or the machine starts to lean or shift, do not jump – stay in the platform and hold on
- Sound the alarm or call for help immediately
- If you're on the ground and see a lift tip or drop, move away from the fall zone and call emergency services right away

FINAL WORD

Every time you step onto a lift, you're making a choice to be careful or to take a chance. Make the right choice every time – inspect it, clip in, and never reach beyond what's safe. The ground is a long way down.
