Aerial Lift Safety: Inspection

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Applicable OSHA Standards?

Aerial lifts include the following types of vehicle-mounted platforms used to elevate you to work locations above ground level: extensible boom platforms; aerial ladders; articulating boom platforms; vertical towers or a combination of such devices. **For construction sites see §1926.453** at Subpart L. **For industrial sites see §1910.67** at Subpart F. But remember, no matter where you use an aerial lift, OSHA wants you to follow the industry consensus standard, **ANSI A92.2-1969.**

Are they dangerous?

Lifts allow workers a safe work station that is easy to move while giving access to temporary and hard to reach locations. Unfortunately, there are fatalities and serious injuries associated with the use of aerial lifts. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates 20 construction workers die each year while using this equipment. Major causes of accidents include:

- falls while working outside of the rail
- falls when struck by vehicles or objects
- *falls when lift suddenly jerks*
- *tip-over due to boom collapse*
- *tip-over due to steep slope, rough or unstable terrain*
- *electrocution when contacting overhead power lines*
- crushed or caught between work platform/bucket edge and an object.

Inspection Might Be Able to Prevent These Accidents

What are the basic rules for safety?

Here are a few simple rules to make your use of aerial lifts safe:

- Insist upon being trained on the particular manufacturer and model prior to first use
- Read the manufacturer's manual before using for the first time
- Identify all manufacturer approved anchor points
- Refresh your safety knowledge by rereading the manufacturer's manual quarterly – rental equipment manuals do change.

What are the inspection requirements?

OSHA, ANSI and the equipment manufacturer all require that you perform a pre-start safety inspection. Specifically:

- Be sure you are familiar with the particular piece of equipment and its printed instructions
- Check all surfaces and ground conditions prior to starting
- Walk all paths you plan to travel and look for hazards – wires, other work in the area, etc.
- Check wheels and tires
- Check all operating and emergency controls – both ground and upper controls
- Check safety devices such as outrigger and guardrails
- Check your own personal fall arrest equipment and know where to anchor
- Immediately report any unsafe conditions. Don't use unsafe equipment!

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