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Aerial Lifts

Aerial lifts are vehicle-mounted, boom-supported aerial platforms, such as cherry pickers or bucket trucks, used to access above-ground jobsites. The major causes of fatalities involving aerial lifts are falls, electrocutions, collapses and tip-overs.

Employers must take measures to ensure the safe use of aerial lifts by their workers if they are required to use this equipment in the course of their employment.

Tips for working safely with aerial lifts:

- Make sure that workers who operate aerial lifts are properly trained in the safe use of the equipment.
- Maintain and operate elevating work platforms according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Never override hydraulic, mechanical, or electrical safety devices.
- Never move the equipment with workers in an elevated platform unless this is permitted by the manufacturer.
- Do not allow workers to position themselves between overhead hazards, such as joists and beams, and the rails of the basket. Movement of the lift could crush the worker(s).
- Maintain a minimum clearance of at least 10 feet, or 3 meters, away from the nearest energized overhead lines.
- Always treat power lines, wires and other conductors as energized, even if they are down or appear to be insulated.
- Use a body harness or restraining belt with a lanyard attached to the boom or basket to prevent the worker(s) from being ejected or pulled from the basket.
- Set the brakes and use wheel chocks when on an incline.
- Use outriggers, if provided.
- Do not exceed the load limits of the equipment. Allow for the combined weight of the worker, tools and materials.

References

Information extracted from online article *Aerial Lifts: Protect Yourself* by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The article can be found at <http://www.osha.gov/publications>.



The PEI Safety Program Audit is aimed at helping companies provide a safe place of work for all employees. The program is completely confidential and available to distributors doing business in the United States. Each Safety Program Audit reviews company health and safety philosophies, training programs and facilities, as well as written corporate safety policies, chemical inventory sheets and various forms required by OSHA. For information, contact PEI at (918) 494-9696 or cbouldin@pei.org.