

## Aerial Lifts

Aerial lifts can accommodate many odd jobs involving high and tough reaching places. Normally utilized to perform regular maintenance in buildings with elevated ceilings, prune tree branches, hoist burdensome shelving units or fix telephone cables. A ladder could also be used for some of the aforementioned projects, although aerial platform lifts offer more security and stability when correctly used.

There are many designs of aerial lift trucks available on the market depending on what the task required involves. Painters sometimes use scissor aerial jacks for example, which are classified as mobile scaffolding, effective in painting trim and reaching the 2nd story and above on buildings. The scissor aerial hoists 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 raise.

Cherry pickers and bucket lift trucks are a further kind of the aerial lift. Typically, they possess a bucket at the end of a long arm and as the arm unfolds, the attached bucket lift rises. Forklifts use a pronged arm that rises upwards as the handle is moved. Boom lift trucks have a hydraulic arm which extends outward and hoists the platform. All of these aerial hoists have need of special training to operate.

Through the Occupational Safety & Health Association, also called OSHA, training courses are offered to help make sure the employees meet occupational values for safety, machine operation, inspection and upkeep and machine load capacities. Workforce receive qualifications upon completion of the course and only OSHA certified personnel should run aerial platform lifts. The Occupational Safety & Health Organization has formed rules to maintain safety and prevent injury when using aerial platform lifts. Common sense rules such as not utilizing this piece of equipment to give rides and ensuring all tires on aerial lifts are braced so as to hinder machine tipping are referred to within the guidelines.

Sadly, statistics illustrate that over 20 operators die each year when working with aerial lift trucks and 8% of those are commercial painters. Most of these accidents are due to improper tire bracing and the lift falling over; for that reason several of these deaths had been preventable. Operators should ensure that all wheels are locked and braces as a critical security precaution to prevent the machine from toppling over.

Other guidelines involve marking the encircling area of the device in an observable manner to protect passers-by and to guarantee 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 power lines and the aerial lift. Operators of this machinery are also highly recommended to always wear the proper security harness while up in the air.