Aerial Platform Safety Meeting Kit

Sometimes, workers need to use aerial platforms, aerial ladders, articulating boom platforms, vertical towers, or ladder trucks to reach their work. When you work at an elevated height, extra training and attention to safety procedures is a necessity.

HAZARDS

The most common aerial lift hazards are:

Falls: Falls often occur when a worker doesn't wear a harness, or fails to properly hook his or her harness to the lift's platform.

Electrocution: When using aerial lifts near power lines it's especially important for workers to be aware of their surroundings. Inattention to surroundings can cause a worker to raise the lift's bucket, causing the individual(s) in the bucket to come in contact with a power line and, in turn, get electrocuted.

Tip-Overs: Injuries sustained from aerial lifts tipping over are often the result of failure to use outriggers when a job takes place on uneven and/or soft ground.

Falling Objects: If you do not stay alert while on an aerial lift platform, it's easy to inadvertently make contact with an object, such as a paint bucket or hammer, causing it to fall off the platform and strike someone below.

Structural Failure: Even if safety policies are adhered to, the aerial lift itself can cause accidents. All machinery needs to be thoroughly inspected before use to ensure there are no safety hazards such as loose bolts or cracks.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES FOR OPERATING AERIAL WORK PLATFORMS

- **Receive proper training (both general training and hands-on practical training)** on, as well as become familiar with, the exact aerial work platform you will be operating. This includes thoroughly reading the operator's manual and safety signs on the machine, as well as understanding the function and location of all safety devices and controls before beginning operation.
- **Read, understand and obey all of your employer's safety rules and worksite regulations**, as well as any applicable local, governmental or provincial regulations that apply before operating the machine.
- **Perform a pre-operation inspection** and function tests on the equipment before each shift. If the machine fails any of these inspections or tests, make sure it is immediately tagged and removed from service until it can be repaired by a qualified service technician.
- **Perform a workplace hazard assessment prior to moving the machine to the jobsite.** Look for hazardous situations such as drop-offs and holes, slopes, slippery or unstable surfaces, overhead obstacles, power lines and any other hazards that may exist. Develop a plan to avoid those hazards through all phases of machine operation.
- **Wear the proper fall protection and always connect it to the designated anchor points.** A properly fitted full body harness and appropriate lanyard or self-retracting lifeline will reduce the potential for an operator being catapulted from the platform of a boom. The impact at the base of the machine can translate into a sudden and powerful whiplash at the platform – if this happens, wearing the proper fall protection may reduce the chances of serious injury or even death.
- **Only raise the platform on a firm, level surface**. If the

level alarm sounds, it means you need to move the platform to a level surface before elevating. If you are already elevated when the alarm sounds, immediately lower the platform and move to a firm, level area.

- **Do not sit, stand or climb on the platform guardrails.** The operator should maintain a firm footing on the platform floor at all times. If an operator is required to reach an overhead work area that is too small for the platform guardrails to allow access to, determine if the selected aerial work platform is the right one for the job.
- **Do not exit an elevated boom or scissor lift platform unless you have been properly trained** to do so, maintain 100 percent tie-off at all times and are in possession of an approval letter from the manufacturer.
- **Do not climb down from the platform when it is raised.** Whenever possible, keep a cell phone or two-way radio with you while you are in the platform and always have a rescue plan in place in the event that the secondary lowering system (i.e. emergency lowering system) system malfunctions.

FINAL WORD

Working at elevated heights poses additional safety risks. Extra training, vigilance and attention to the smallest safety details must be addressed to avoid any complacency to set in the mindset of workers.