Bucket Truck Safety for Municipalities Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Bucket trucks are an essential piece of equipment for municipalities to perform tasks such as tree trimming, repairing streetlights, and building maintenance. However, these trucks also pose significant safety risks if they are not used correctly.

WHAT ARE BUCKET TRUCKS?

Bucket trucks are aerial work platforms that use a platform or bucket attached to the end of a hydraulic lift system, which can lift the platform up to places that are difficult to reach by ladder.

They are typically attached to the end of the truck or other vehicles and are used for completing work in high places, such as on telephone wires, high building surfaces, treetops, and other comparable sites.

Bucket trucks are normally used to repair phone or power lines, clean windows, trim trees, paint, pick fruit, do construction-related work, and do other tasks.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

COMMON BUCKET TRUCK HAZARDS THAT MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD BE AWARE OF

- **Electrical Hazards:** Bucket trucks are often used to perform maintenance on overhead power lines, which poses a significant electrical hazard to workers. Before starting work, it is essential to ensure that all electrical lines are de-energized or adequately insulated.
- **Falls:** Workers can fall from the bucket if it is not securely positioned or if they are not wearing the

appropriate fall protection equipment, such as a safety harness and lanyard.

- **Tip-overs:** Bucket trucks can tip over if they are not set up correctly, or the operator exceeds the machine's load capacity. This can cause serious injuries or fatalities.
- **Struck-by Hazards:** Workers and bystanders can be struck by falling objects, such as tools or debris, or by the bucket truck itself if it collides with other vehicles or objects.
- **Mechanical Failure:** Bucket trucks have many moving parts and hydraulic systems that can fail, causing the bucket to drop unexpectedly or the truck to become unstable.
- **Struck-by Objects:** Falling objects or equipment, such as tools or tree limbs, can strike workers in the bucket or on the ground, causing head injuries or other types of trauma.
- **Entanglement:** Clothing or body parts can get entangled in moving parts of the bucket truck, causing serious injuries or even amputations.
- **Burns:** Workers may be exposed to hot surfaces or fluids, such as hydraulic fluid or hot metal, leading to burns.
- **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:** If the bucket truck is powered by an internal combustion engine, workers can be exposed to carbon monoxide, leading to poisoning.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

BEST MUNICIPAL MEASURES TO PREVENT BUCKET TRUCK ACCIDENTS

- **Conduct proper training:** Before allowing any operator to use a bucket truck, ensure that they have received proper training on the equipment's operation and safety procedures. This should include training on emergency response procedures, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- **Inspect equipment regularly:** Conduct regular inspections of the bucket truck and its components, such as the bucket, hydraulic systems, and controls, to ensure they are in good working condition.
- **Use proper PPE:** Ensure that all workers using the bucket truck wear proper PPE, such as hard hats, eye protection,

and harnesses. This will help protect them from falls, debris, and other hazards.

- **Avoid power lines:** Keep the bucket truck at least 10 feet away from any overhead power lines to prevent electrocution. Use a spotter if necessary to help guide the operator away from power lines.
- **Stabilize the truck:** Ensure that the truck is stabilized before using the bucket. This will prevent the truck from tipping over or shifting during use, which can cause serious injury or property damage.
- **Follow manufacturer guidelines:** Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for the safe operation and maintenance of the bucket truck. This will help ensure that the equipment is used safely and that it remains in good working condition.
- **Proper Training:** All workers who operate or work around bucket trucks should receive proper training on how to safely use the equipment, including how to operate the controls, how to conduct pre-trip inspections, and how to perform maintenance.
- **Adhere to Safety Guidelines:** Workers should follow all safety guidelines and procedures, including wearing the appropriate PPE and following safe operating procedures for the equipment.
- **Regular Safety Audits:** Regular safety audits can help identify potential hazards and risks associated with bucket truck operations.
- **Risk Assessments:** Conducting risk assessments prior to performing any task with the bucket truck can help identify potential hazards and risks associated with the job.
- **Develop and enforce safety policies:** Municipalities should develop and enforce safety policies that mandate the use of personal protective equipment, adherence to safety guidelines, and regular maintenance.
- **Conduct regular inspections and maintenance:** Regular inspections and maintenance can identify potential safety issues before they become problems.
- **Practice safe driving:** Safe driving practices are crucial to preventing bucket truck accidents. Operators should follow

traffic laws and regulations, be aware of the height of the bucket truck, and maintain a safe distance from other vehicles and objects.

- **Establish communication protocols:** Communication is essential when using a bucket truck. Operators should establish communication protocols with other workers on the ground to ensure their safety.

BUCKET TRUCK SAFETY TAKEAWAY

To manage hazards, municipalities should implement appropriate safety procedures, including training workers on safe bucket truck operation, conducting regular inspections, and using appropriate PPE and fall protection equipment. Workers should be trained on emergency procedures and rescue techniques in case of an incident.

FINAL WORD

Bucket trucks are an important investment for municipalities that can improve the efficiency, safety, and quality of maintenance and repair work while also saving money and improving service delivery.