

Safety Alert: Student Worker Killed While Filming Football Practice from Scissor Lift

Incident

During the fall 2010 football season, a student employee of the University of Notre Dame was killed while filming the school's football practice from a "scissor lift." A scissor lift is a portable, hydraulic-powered lift with a platform that can be raised into the air. According to reports, the worker had raised the lift 50 feet into the air to film the practice. The wind gusts that day were greater than 50 miles per hour. The high winds blew the lift over, killing the worker.

Hazards

Schools, universities, professional teams, and other organizations that have workers, including student employees, who use scissor lifts to film sporting events, band concerts, team practices or other events, need to consider the same hazards as other workplaces that use scissor lifts. These can include:

- The lift toppling over or a user slipping off the platform if the lift is:
 - used during bad weather or high winds,
 - positioned on soft or uneven ground, or on weak utility covers (e.g., underground sprinkler valve boxes),
 - overloaded with heavy objects,
 - used with guardrails removed,
- The lift rolling and toppling over if the brakes are not properly set,
- A user being electrocuted if the lift is too close to and comes in contact with electrical lines.

How to Reduce Hazards



Employers need to:

- Establish safe work practices, train workers, and make sure workers operate lifts safely
- Make sure the scissor lift has a guardrail system to protect a worker from falling
- Test and inspect the scissor lift before use each day
- Maintain scissor lifts according to the manufacturer's instructions

When using a scissor lift, workers need to:

- Put the lift on a firm, level surface
- Set the brakes before raising the lift
- Stay clear of electrical power sources (e.g., power lines, transformers) – at least 10 feet

Do not:

- Use the lift during bad weather or on a windy day (see Operator's Manual for limits)
- Stand on guardrails to gain height
- Overload the lift (see Operator's Manual for weight limits)
- Move the scissor lift when the platform is raised

How INSafe Can Help

OSHA does not have a standard that specifically covers scissor lifts. Scissor lifts are covered under OSHA's scaffolding standard.

[OSHA's Tools and Resources on Scaffolding](#)
[INSafe's free On-site Consultation Program](#)

Contact INSafe by email at insafe@dol.in.gov or phone (317) 232-2688.