

HAZARD ALERT: Scissor Lifts

The Issue



Nationwide, in 2009, 22 workers suffered a fatal occupational injury while operating a man lift. Scissor lifts are classified as a type of man lift.

Scissor lifts are large pieces of versatile equipment that are commonly used inside warehouses and factories, during sporting events and on construction jobsites. These lifts have proven to be invaluable for operators and have replaced some of the common everyday use of scaffolding and traditional ladders.

This **Hazard Alert** is intended to heighten awareness of the occupational safety hazards associated with the use of scissor lifts and provide employers with guidance to protect their employees. The document should serve as a convenient tool for employers. It should be expanded and tailored to individual companies, places of business or worksite. This document does not alter or determine compliance responsibilities set forth in the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

What are the Risks?

While this equipment is particularly useful for employees to conduct work at heights, scissor lifts can be dangerous when not properly maintained and serviced, used inappropriately or used by an untrained operator. Operators are at risk for suffering injuries, including death from **falls, struck-by, caught-in/between** and **electrocution**.

What Can Employers Do?

Developing a culture of workplace safety and health excellence requires that employers design clear, explicit policies to be coupled with sound practices.

Employers and Employees Should:

- Know the equipment.** This includes understanding each component of the lift—load capacity, preventative maintenance schedule, requirements for performing modifications, whether or not the lift is rated for outdoor use, etc.

- Develop scissor lift operator training.** One of the most important aspects of the safe operation of these lifts include ensuring the operator has received the proper training to safely operate the equipment. Operator retraining should occur as often as necessary.

- Develop safe work procedures.** It is necessary to establish work procedures and rules that do not require, nor make it necessary for workers to engage in activities that pose a safety or health risk.

- Develop a preventative maintenance plan.** All equipment,

including scissor lifts, should receive regular preventative maintenance to ensure it is in good working condition. Equipment must be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Using substitute parts or poor repair methods could result in equipment failures, which can lead to worker injury.

- Conduct regular lift inspections.** Prior to using scissor lifts, operators must conduct a visual inspection of the lift. Inspections must be conducted before each work shift and after any occurrence that could affect the structural integrity of the equipment. Operators must review safety devices, emergency controls, fall protection equipment, the lift vehicle's tires and other critical components.

- Analyze the work area.** Operators must review the area in which the lift will be operated. During this review, the operator must check for any ground depressions or obstructions, such as drop-offs, debris and potholes.

The operator must also conduct a thorough scan of the sky to ensure there are not any overhead obstructions with which lifts may come in contact. Notable obstructions include power lines, trees, pipes, building structures, canopies, rafters, etc.

- Regularly monitor weather conditions.** It is important to know, not all lifts are rated for outdoor use. Weather conditions that must be regularly monitored include rain, snow, sleet, hail, ice and wind. Generally, scissor lifts that are rated for outdoor use have a maximum wind speed of 28 miles per hour.

- Walk the talk—be a role model.** Ensure that management and supervisors follow the same safety policies and procedures that employees are expected to follow.

Additional Assistance

INSafe, the Indiana Department of Labor's OSHA consultation program, provides employers with free on-site consultation, outreach, training and education. INSafe's resources are designed to assist employers to further *advance the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace*.

INSafe Safety and Health Consultants can help employers by:

- Reducing occupational injury and illness rates** by identifying and correcting occupational safety and health hazards.

- Providing advice and technical assistance** for compliance with occupational safety and health standards.

- Working with employers and employees** to develop and implement effective safety and health management systems.

For more information about INSafe, visit www.in.gov/dol/in-safe, email insafe@dol.in.gov or phone (317) 232-2688. To initiate a request for INSafe on-site consultation, please visit www.in.gov/dol/insafeconsultation.