

Safety Note #173
Scissor Lift Safety



Scissor lifts have replaced some of the common uses of scaffolding and traditional ladders. However, scissor lifts can be dangerous when not properly maintained, used inappropriately, or used by an untrained operator. Every year workers are seriously injured or killed by improper use of a scissor lift. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) states that in 2009, twenty two workers were fatally injured while operating a scissor lift. The National Safety Council reminds us that most accidents are caused by the failure to follow safety rules and precautions.

Training

Proper training for operators of scissor lifts is required. Training should include, load capacity requirements, falling from the lift, falling objects, and electrical hazards. Training must include Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the type of work being performed, and any required fall protection equipment. Indoor/outdoor safety work area

hazards and weather conditions must also be included in the training.

Inspections

A pre-shift inspection of the scissor lift must be conducted prior to use. The inspection should include safety devices, controls, fall protection safeguard devices, tires and other critical components. The pre-shift inspection must be documented. A Scissor Lift Pre-Shift Inspection form is available at http://safety.ucanr.org/Safety_Notes/.

Work area inspections must also be conducted to ensure a safe work area. Scissor lifts should not be operated near potholes, debris, drop-offs, sloped ground, uneven or soft areas and ground obstructions. Operators should also be aware of overhead obstructions that may come into contact with the equipment. Obstructions may include, power lines, trees, building structures, etc. Adverse weather conditions including rain, snow, sleet, hail and wind, must also be monitored while operating a scissor lift outdoors.

Repairs and Maintenance

Operators must report any damage of the scissor lift to their supervisors and unsafe equipment must be taken out of service immediately until repaired. All equipment should receive regular **preventative maintenance** to ensure it is in good condition. Repairs should be made as needed. All equipment should be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

Operating Tips

- Ensure the chains or doors on the platform are closed at all times when inside and moving the lift.
- Operators must be standing on the floor of the platform or bucket at all times. Climbing, riding on the bumpers, or leaning over the guardrails is forbidden.
- Never exceed the load capacity set by the manufacturer. In high traffic areas use cones and signs to provide visual notice of work area.
- Proper fall protection equipment must be used if it is required.
- Never drive or reposition the lift when it is elevated as this may cause the lift to tip over.
- Maintain safe clearances from overhead obstructions and electrical power lines or other apparatus.
- Never use a ladder, scaffolding, or other devices to increase the size or working height of the scissor lift platform.
- **FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE ABOVE INFORMATION MAY RESULT IN SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH!**