CrewSigned

Aerial Lift Safety Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

Boom lifts and scissor lifts let us work at height without ladders, and when they are used right they are much safer. But workers are killed every year when lifts tip over, when they are thrown out of a basket, when they get crushed between the platform and a beam, or when the lift touches a power line. Only trained and authorized people run lifts on our jobs.

Start with an inspection. Test the controls every day before you use the lift, both the platform controls and the ground controls. Check the tires, the guardrails and gate, the emergency stop, the alarms, and look for leaks or damage. If something is wrong, tag it out and tell me.

Look at where you will work. Check the ground for slopes, holes, soft spots, curbs and debris. Look up for power lines, beams, pipes and anything you could get pinned against. Stay at least ten feet away from power lines, and farther for higher voltages. Set outriggers and brakes the way the manufacturer says. Do not drive a lift with the platform raised unless it is made for that, and never on a slope beyond what the machine allows.

In a boom lift, wear a harness and clip your lanyard to the anchor point in the basket, not to a nearby structure. Keep your feet on the floor. Do not sit or climb on the rails, and do not use planks, ladders or buckets to get higher. If you cannot reach, lower the platform and move the machine.

In a scissor lift, the guardrails are your fall protection. Keep the gate or chain closed and do not lean over or climb the rails. Some companies and manufacturers also require a lanyard in a scissor lift, so follow the rules for that machine.

Know the load limit and do not go over it, counting people, tools and material. Watch the wind limit for outdoor work and come down when it gets gusty.

Watch your surroundings as you move. Crushing injuries happen when someone raises a platform or swings a boom into a ceiling or beam and gets pinned against the controls. Move slowly near structures and keep your body inside the platform.

Before you start, make sure someone on the ground knows how to bring the platform down with the lower controls if you need help.

Discussion questions

1. What is overhead and around the lift path today, including power lines and beams?
2. Where in the boom lift do you clip your lanyard, and why there?
3. What ground conditions would make you stop and reposition the lift?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1926.453, Aerial lifts
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.453

SOURCES
Working Safely with Scissor Lifts Hazard Alert (OSHA 3842): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3842.pdf
OSHA Fall Protection: https://www.osha.gov/fall-protection

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

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COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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