

Safety TOOLBOX TALKS

A ready-to-use training lesson to drive home the essentials of safety.

February 2012

Operating aerial lifts safely

► What's at Stake

It's not enough for workers to remain clear of electrical lines – any noninsulated equipment they have with them must stay a safe distance away, too.

Randy Mock was connecting a power line in Wilsonburg, PA, when the noninsulated bucket he was standing in accidentally touched a power line, shocking him and setting his clothes on fire. He suffered severe burns over most of his body. After a month-long struggle, he succumbed to his injuries in the burn unit of a local hospital.

► Critical Safety Points

At least one employee dies every week from injuries sustained while operating aerial-lift equipment. Common causes include:

- electrocutions from contacting live electrical lines
- falls from employees not wearing proper fall protection
- tipovers because of an overloaded lift bucket or operating the lift on uneven surfaces, and
- employees struck by or caught between the lift bucket and an object such as steel beams or joists.

Prior to operation:

1. **Inspect the lift.** Check operating and emergency controls, safety devices such as outriggers and guardrails, personal fall protection gear, and tires. Look for possible leaks in air, hydraulic fluid or fuel systems and check for loose or missing parts.
2. **Check the jobsite.** Look for a level surface that won't shift. Never exceed slope limits listed by the manufacturer. Watch for hazards such as holes, bumps, debris and overhead electrical lines.

During operation:

1. **Use fall protection.** Wearing a harness won't do any good if you aren't tied off. Be sure to attach your lanyard to the boom or basket, not adjacent objects such as a utility pole. Remain inside the bucket and don't climb or stand on guardrails to reach a destination. Instead, move the lift.
2. **Stay away from electrical lines.** At least ten feet away to be exact. Assume that all power lines are energized even if they are down or appear to be insulated.
3. **Don't exceed the load limit.** Remember the load limit includes everything in the bucket: you and co-workers, tools and materials.

► Quiz Time

Find out how much participants learned during this meeting. Distribute copies of the quiz on the other side of this page. Grade the quizzes using the answers to the right.

Instructions:

Use Toolbox Talks to spark safety discussions. On the flip side is a quiz to make sure participants retain the valuable information.

Session Date

Supervisor/Instructor

Attendee List:

QUIZ ANSWER KEY (Quiz on other side)

1. **True.**
2. **False.** People don't always use fall protection when it's provided.
3. **True.**
4. **False.** It must be inspected prior to **each** use.
5. **True.**
6. **D.** All of the above.
7. **False.** Harnesses must be attached to the boom or bucket.

SAFETY MEETING QUIZ

Employee Name:	Signature:
Department:	Date:
Score: _____ / 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass <input type="checkbox"/> Fail
Trainer:	Signature:

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Question 1: Electrocutation is a common cause of injury and death when operating aerial lifts.

True False

Question 2: Falls are not a common cause of injury and death since fall protection is always provided.

True False

Question 3: Tipovers can occur from overloading the lift bucket or operating it on uneven surfaces.

True False

Question 4: An aerial lift must be inspected at the beginning of each work week.

True False

Question 5: Prior to use, operators should check the jobsite for uneven grounding, holes, drop-offs, bumps, debris and electrical lines.

True False

Question 6: When operating an aerial lift, you should:

- A. Use fall protection
- B. Stay at least ten feet away from electrical lines
- C. Never exceed the load limit of the equipment
- D. All of the above.

Question 7: When tying off, you can attach your harness to adjacent structures as long as they can support your weight.

True False

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453A Baltimore Pike • Springfield, PA 19064

Phone: 484-479-2700 • Fax: 610-543-2292

www.b21pubs.com