



SAFETY SHORTS

AERIAL WORK PLATFORMS



Manlifts and scissor lifts are two pieces of equipment that many workers can't imagine working without. This equipment, if used correctly, provides quick and safe access to work areas that otherwise could only be reached from scaffolding or an extension ladder. These lifts, collectively called Aerial Work Platforms, are important tools. As with any tool, there are right and wrong ways to use them.

Aerial lifts are typically used by municipalities and schools to perform building maintenance such as painting, cleaning ductwork, changing light bulbs, and for hanging signs, decorations, or artwork.

The most important tip to remember before operating any aerial lift platform, is *always read and follow* the manufacturer's safety and operation manual! This information must be kept on the equipment and can usually be found in a PVC tube that is fastened to the machine's frame or rails. Do not operate if you suspect a malfunction or if you are not authorized or trained to run the aerial platform!

Safe Operating Procedures for Manlifts and Scissor Lifts:

- Only trained and authorized people should operate the lift. A qualified instructor must make sure that every operator reads and understands the equipment's safety and operating instructions. This includes all of the warning decals and labels mounted on the machine.
- Always check for overhead obstructions before driving or elevating the platform; Inspect for energized electrical conductors and parts and maintain a safe distance.
- Refuel tanks only when the unit is turned off. If battery powered, the batteries should be charged only in a well-ventilated area, away from any open flame.
- Before each shift, the operator should complete a safety inspection; this includes both a visual inspection and a function test. If a problem is found, get the lift repaired.
- Elevate the platform only when it is on a firm, level surface. Although many lifts look like a rough terrain piece of equipment, they are not. Their large tires do allow the equipment to access somewhat difficult areas, but once in position most are designed to be out of level only 5° while in operation.
- Never exceed the designed lifting capacity.



Scissor lifts are efficient one-direction lifts. They provide a solid surface to work from, but always remember:

- Guardrail, midrails, and toe boards must be in place.
- The platform must be equipped with a mechanical parking brake that will hold the unit securely on any slope it is capable of climbing. The brake should be tested periodically.
- Never use the lift's rails, planks across the rails, or a ladder, to gain additional height.

Unique hazards for manlifts: Manlifts can move in more than a single direction, increasing the risk of mishaps, so it is important to remember the following:

- Whenever working from a manlift, a full body harness must be worn and properly attached to the basket. A sudden jolt has thrown people from manlifts, before they could react.
- Always maintain a safe distance from debris piles, drop-offs, floor openings, etc.
- Never drive the manlift when it is elevated above the limit the manufacturer considers safe. Operating instructions for each piece of equipment will state what the maximum extension can be while being driven.

Used correctly, aerial work platforms can be timesaving assets. Operate them without regard to their limitations, and this same equipment will put you and those around you, at undue risk.

How about liability hazards?

- Areas around aerial-lift operations must be barricaded to prevent injury to pedestrians and other workers. When other moving equipment is present, precautions such as warnings, barriers or flashing lights must be used as appropriate.
- When an aerial platform is unattended, it must be secured to protect against unauthorized use.

