

safety matters

Construction
Toolbox Talks for Powerhouse Retail Services

From your safety partners at Higginbotham

Scissor Lift Safety Tips

Scissor lifts are regularly used inside warehouses and on construction job sites to help workers perform work at heights. There are three types of scissor lifts: hydraulic, which use hydraulic oil to lift the platform up and down; mechanical, which includes all electrical and diesel-operated lifts; and pneumatic, which use air pressure to lift the platform.

Scissor lifts are useful for work in small areas as they are easily maneuverable. They are simple to use but can be dangerous when not properly maintained and serviced, used inappropriately or used by an untrained operator. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 15 U.S. workers were killed while operating a scissor lift in 2012.

Despite the danger involved in using a scissor lift, there are many things you can do to stay safe while using one.

- **Always perform a pre-work inspection.** Never begin work with a scissor lift without first making sure all its components are in proper working order.
- **Do not use a lift if you are not properly trained.** Know the manufacturer's operating guidelines—they're meant to ensure safety and save lives.
- **Never operate a scissor lift in inclement weather.** Wind can easily knock down a raised scissor lift. If the forecast calls for rain or gusty conditions, avoid using the scissor lift outdoors. Most scissor lifts have a wind rating of 30 miles per hour or lower.
- **Do not overload the lift.** Check the lift's specifications to determine how much weight can be loaded onto the platform. Never exceed this number—doing so could cause the lift to tip over.

- **Always keep the lift lowered when moving.** Moving on uneven land could cause the lift to tip over if raised. Always follow the manufacturer's safe operating guidelines.
- **Do not stand or lean against guardrails.** Move closer to your target to avoid breaking the guardrails, which are not meant to be weight-bearing.
- **Select work locations that are clear of electrical power sources.** The lift should be at least 10 feet away from power lines, transformers and other overhead hazards, such as branches, overhangs, etc.
- **Avoid performing work on an unstable or uneven surface.** These hazards include drop-offs or holes, slopes, bumps or ground obstructions, or debris.
- **Always set the brakes before lifting.** Brakes add an extra layer of security to prohibit the lift from moving while you're working.
- **Don't be complacent.** Always keep safety in mind when using any type of lift. Focus on the job at hand and you will finish it quickly and efficiently.

If you feel uncomfortable in any way, don't use the lift. Being unfamiliar with a lift can lead to improper use and injury. If you are unsure whether you can properly operate a scissor lift, tell a supervisor.

Not all scissor lifts are rated for outdoor use. Check the manufacturer's recommendations to determine the right scissor lift for the job.

