

## Aerial Lifts

Aerial platform lifts are able to accommodate various tasks involving high and tough reaching places. Often used to perform regular maintenance in buildings with high ceilings, trim tree branches, raise burdensome shelving units or repair phone cables. A ladder might also be utilized for some of the aforementioned projects, although aerial lifts provide more safety and stability when correctly used.

There are a lot of models of aerial hoists available on the market depending on what the task required involves. Painters sometimes use scissor aerial hoists for instance, which are classified as mobile scaffolding, of use in painting trim and reaching the 2nd story and above on buildings. The scissor aerial hoists use criss-cross braces to stretch and extend upwards. There is a platform attached to the top of the braces that rises simultaneously as the criss-cross braces raise.

Container trucks and cherry pickers are another type of aerial hoist. They contain a bucket platform on top of an extended arm. As this arm unfolds, the attached platform rises. Lift trucks use a pronged arm that rises upwards as the handle is moved. Boom hoists have a hydraulic arm which extends outward and hoists the platform. Every one of these aerial hoists require special training to operate.

Through the Occupational Safety & Health Association, also called OSHA, education courses are offered to help make sure the employees meet occupational values for safety, system operation, inspection and upkeep and machine cargo capacities. Employees receive qualifications upon completion of the course and only OSHA certified workers should operate aerial lifts. The Occupational Safety & Health Organization has established guidelines to maintain safety and prevent injury when using aerial hoists. Common sense rules such as not using this machine to give rides and making sure all tires on aerial lift trucks are braced so as to hinder machine tipping are observed within the guidelines.

Regrettably, statistics show that over 20 operators pass away each year when running aerial hoists and 8% of those are commercial painters. Most of these incidents are due to improper tire bracing and the hoist falling over; therefore several of these deaths had been preventable. Operators should ensure that all wheels are locked and braces as a critical safety precaution to prevent the machine from toppling over.

Additional rules include marking the encircling area of the machine in an obvious manner to safeguard passers-by and to guarantee they do not approach too close to the operating machine. It is imperative to ensure that there are also 10 feet of clearance amid any utility cables and the aerial hoist. Operators of this machinery are also highly recommended to always have on the proper security harness while up in the air.