

Aerial lifts allow employees to easily access areas they would normally be unable to reach. There are many hazards to be aware of when operating an aerial lift, but in certain situations, it is the safest method of working from heights. The OSHA standard states that only trained and authorized persons are allowed to operate an aerial lift.

## Lift Safety

- Only allow operators that are fully trained to operate the equipment.
- Conduct a pre-use inspection.
- Only use the lift for its designed environment (some lifts are designed for rough terrain, others are not).
- Keep your feet inside the basket, do not stand on the rails or lean on the edge of the basket.
- Inspect your surroundings prior to operating the lift.
- Avoid using the lift to access an upper level. This can only be done if the employee has a double legged self-retracting lifeline and is able to maintain 100% tie off.
- Never use the lift as a tie off point while working outside of the basket.



## Top 5 Aerial Lift Incidents

1. **Electrocution:** This is most commonly when operators come in contact with overhead powerlines.
2. **Falls:** Most commonly from employees not wearing a personal fall arrest system while operating the lift.
3. **Tip-Overs:** This is from exceeding the load capacity of the lift, using in windy/unsafe conditions, and using a lift on uneven terrain.
4. **Caught Between:** This is from when the operator is caught between the lift and material outside of the lift such as framing or roof joists.
5. **Struck By:** This is from when employees make contact with something outside of the basket. It is important to stay vigilant and aware of the overhead hazards while operating the lift.

## Personal Fall Arrest System

Employees operating aerial lifts should use retractable lifelines rather than shock absorbing lanyards. The use of a 6ft shock-absorbing lanyard will permit an employee to be ejected from the lift basket. Due to the freefall distance using this style of lanyard, the opportunity exists for the employee to strike the lower level. A 6ft shock absorbing lanyard will extend to 9.5 feet (3.5 deceleration distance once the shock absorber opens up). Then you must account for the height of the worker, averaging around 6 foot, with a 3 ft safety factor; The employee ejected from the lift could then fall 18.5 feet before the lanyard stopped them. A retractable or tether should be used to eliminate free fall distance. A tether is a non-shock-absorbing lanyard which typically comes in a length of 2-3 feet.

