

Working outdoors in the heat

As the temperatures rise, it can't be stressed enough the importance of understanding the risks and what to do for heat illness. Heat illness occurs when your body can't adequately cool itself through sweating. According to the National Safety Council, 244 people died in the United States from exposure to excessive heat in 2014. Heat illnesses include heatstroke, heat exhaustion, and heat cramps. Workers who are the most vulnerable are those who work outdoors.

- Drink water, about 1 cup of water every 15 minutes, regardless of whether or not you are thirsty.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and liquids with high sugar content.
- Take rest breaks in the shade or in air-conditioned buildings to cool down.
- Wear loose, light-colored, lightweight clothing, and a hat.
- Replace salt lost from sweating by drinking fruit juice or sports drinks.
- Avoid spending time outdoors during the hottest part of the day, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Wear sunscreen; sunburn affects the body's ability to cool itself.
- Pace yourself when you exert your body.
- Ask your supervisor if tasks can be scheduled for earlier or later in the day to avoid midday heat.
- Know the signs of heat stress and what to do in an emergency.
- Watch out for fellow coworkers.
- If you feel faint or weak, stop all activity and get to a cool place.



EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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Tips for aerial lift safety

Preventing a tipover or collapse

Aerial lifts can tip over or collapse for a number of reasons. Common causes of tipovers include high wind and other severe weather conditions, operating on unstable or uneven surfaces, extending the boom too far, loading the basket with too much weight, and damaged or defective equipment. Before using any aerial lift, review the manufacturer's instructions and other safety information posted on the equipment, and read the operating and maintenance manual.

The rated workload and maximum platform height will be posted on the equipment. Never exceed these limits. Some equipment might have different rated workloads that depend on the angle of the boom and on whether outrigger devices or stabilizers are used. Many aerial lifts are designed with interlock devices that help prevent an operator from accidentally exceeding the stability requirements of the equipment and tipping over. Some types of interlocks you may encounter include driving interlocks, outrigger interlocks, and tilt interlocks.

What should you inspect?

Before you use an aerial lift, check the equipment and the surrounding area for the following hazards:

- Obvious defects, such as cracked welds in the basket or the boom equipment.
- Hydraulic oil leaks.
- Signs of wear or damage on control cables.
- Loose wire connections.
- Poor tire condition.
- Improperly functioning operating controls.
- Unstable or soft ground.
- Ditches, drop-offs, or holes. The operator might accidentally drive into one of these and tip over.
- Bumps and other floor obstructions. Be careful not to drive over these obstructions because they can affect your stability.
- Debris. Materials such as garbage, dust, grease, oil, water, or other items could result in your equipment losing stability.

How do you set up the vehicle?

Before elevating anyone in an aerial lift basket, properly set up the vehicle by following these steps:

- Set the brakes so the vehicle will not move while a worker is in the air.
- Place wheel chocks under the tires if the vehicle is on an incline.
- If necessary, position the outriggers or stabilizers on a solid surface.

Before moving the vehicle, make sure the boom is properly cradled and outriggers or stabilizers are returned and stowed in position. Although some equipment is designed to be moved while a worker is in the basket, never move the equipment unless the basket has been lowered and the boom has been retracted. Make sure the path of travel is firm, level, and free of obstructions. While driving, maintain a safe distance from obstacles, debris, holes, depressions, ramps, and other hazards, and drive at a safe speed.

Prevent violence in the workplace

The Joint Commission recently published a Sentinel Event Alert to urge healthcare entities to take action to implement protections for workers against workplace violence. Healthcare workers experience a disproportionately high occurrence of assaults. Unfortunately, healthcare workers aren't the only ones who experience workplace violence. Here are some things that employees in all industries can do to participate in creating policies that prevent violence in the workplace:

Participate in the development, implementation, evaluation, and modification of a violence prevention program;

Participate in safety and health committees that receive reports of violent incidents or security problems, making facility inspections, and responding to recommendations for corrective strategies;

Provide input on additions to or redesigns of facilities;

Identify the daily activities that employees believe put them most at risk;

Discuss any assessments to improve policies and procedures, including complaint and suggestion programs;

Ensure that there is a way to report and record incidents and near misses and that issues are addressed;

Ensure that there are procedures to ensure that there is no retaliation against employees who voice concerns or report injuries; *and*

Take employee training and continuing education programs.



Aerial lift safety: Quiz

Choose the correct response to the following statements.

1. You should never exceed workload limits. **True or False**
2. Aerial lift interlock devices can ultimately cause a tipover. **True or False**
3. Which is not a common cause of an aerial lift tipover?
 - A. Operating on stable and even surfaces
 - B. Extending the bottom too far
 - C. Loading the basket with too much weight
4. You only need to inspect the ground or surface before using an aerial lift. **True or False**
5. If the aerial lift is on an incline, place wheel chocks under the tires. **True or False**

Answers

1. **True.** Workload and maximum platform height will be posted on the equipment. Observe and follow these limits when using the aerial lift. Some equipment may have different workloads. 2. **False.** Interlock devices are designed to prevent a tipover by stopping an operator from accidentally exceeding the stability requirements of the equipment. 3. **A. Operating on stable and even surfaces.** Aerial lifts can tip over by extending the boom too far, loading the basket with too much weight, from high wind and other severe weather conditions, by operating on unstable or uneven surfaces, and because of damaged or defective equipment. 4. **False.** Inspect the equipment *and* the surrounding area before using an aerial lift, including tire condition, loose wire connections, and ditches. 5. **True.** Before using the lift to elevate anyone, set the brakes properly, place wheel chocks under the tires if the lift is on an incline, and position the outriggers or stabilizers on a solid surface.

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Hot work tips

What is "hot work"? Hot work is any spark-producing operation that has the potential to ignite fires or explosions, including burning or welding. Food processing, pulp and paper manufacturing, oil production, fuel storage, and waste treatment see hot work accidents. The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) says the most common causes of worker death due to hot work are explosions and fires due to flammable atmospheres in confined spaces. The CSB recently released the following tips to prevent deaths and incidents related to hot work.

Use alternatives. Whenever possible, avoid hot work, and ask your supervisor about alternative methods.

Know the hazards. Before starting hot work, be aware of the hazard assessment for the scope of the work, potential hazards, and methods of hazard control.

Monitor the atmosphere. Conduct effective gas monitoring in the work area using a combustible gas detector before and during hot work activities.

Test the area. In work areas where flammable liquids and gases are stored or handled, drain and/or purge all equipment and piping before hot work is conducted. Continuously monitor all surrounding tanks or adjacent spaces for the presence of flammables, and eliminate potential sources of flammables.

Have the proper training. Do not perform hot work unless you know the hot work policies/procedures, proper use and calibration of combustible gas detectors, safety equipment, and job-specific hazards and controls.

If you are a contractor, make sure you know about site-specific hazards, including the presence of flammable materials, before starting the job.