

# safety matters

Construction  
Toolbox Talks

From your safety partners at **Crendon Insurance Brokers Ltd**

## Use Scissor Lifts Safely

Scissor lifts are commonly used inside warehouses and at construction jobsites 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 include 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 manoeuvrable. However, they can be dangerous when used inappropriately or by an untrained operator, or when not properly maintained and serviced. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 requires that all work at height on a scissor lift be planned properly, supervised appropriately and carried out in a reasonably safe manner.

There are a number of things you can do to stay safe while using a scissor lift:

- **Always perform a pre-work inspection.** Never begin work with a scissor lift without first making sure all its components are in 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 12.5 m/s 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—it 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 clear of power lines, transformers and other overhead hazards, such as branches and overhangs.
- **Avoid performing work on an unstable or uneven surface.** These hazards include drop-offs, holes, slopes, bumps, ground obstructions and debris.
- **Always set the brakes before lifting.** Brakes add an extra layer of security to prevent the lift from moving.
- **Don't be complacent.** Always keep safety in mind when using any type of lift. Accidents can happen at any time.
- **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 guidelines to determine the right scissor lift for the job.**



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