Scissor lift toolbox talk: safe use and pre-use checks

29 CFR 1926.454, 1926.451, 1926.21

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

Before you last rode a scissor lift up, did you check the ground, the guardrails and the path overhead?

Why it matters

A scissor lift looks stable, but it is a tall platform on small wheels. A fall over the rail, a tip-over, a crush against something overhead or an object dropped on someone below can happen quickly. Good checks and habits before you raise the platform do most of the work. The OSHA rules cited here do not name scissor lifts, so this talk follows the manufacturer's manual and the scaffold rules that your employer may apply to the lift.

Key points

1. **Get trained on this lift**
   Read the operator's manual and learn the controls on the exact model you will use, including the lower controls and the emergency lowering. Under OSHA's scaffold rules, employees who work on a scaffold must be trained by a qualified person to recognize the hazards of the type of scaffold and how to control them (29 CFR 1926.454(a)). Do not run a lift you have not been trained on.
   29 CFR 1926.454(a)

2. **Inspect before every shift**
   Walk around the lift. Look for leaks, damaged tires, loose parts, missing or bent guardrails, a gate that does not latch and a damaged scissor arm. Test the controls and the alarms. Under the scaffold rules, a competent person inspects a scaffold for visible defects before each work shift (29 CFR 1926.451(f)(3)). If something is wrong, tag the lift out of service and report it.
   29 CFR 1926.451(f)(3)

3. **Stay inside the rails**
   Keep both feet on the platform floor with the guardrails and gate closed. Do not climb on the rails, stand on boxes or put a ladder on the platform to reach higher. If you cannot reach, lower the platform and move the lift. Under the scaffold rules, an employee on a scaffold more than 10 feet above a lower level must be protected from falling (29 CFR 1926.451(g)(1)). Follow the manufacturer's fall protection instructions.
   29 CFR 1926.451(g)(1)

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4 Level ground, load limit, no storms

Drive and raise only on firm, level ground, and watch for holes, drop-offs, slopes and debris. Never load the platform past its rated capacity, and count people, tools and materials. Scaffolds and components must not be loaded past their maximum intended loads or rated capacities, whichever is less (29 CFR 1926.451(f)(1)). Work on or from scaffolds is prohibited during storms or high winds unless a competent person has determined that it is safe and the workers are protected (29 CFR 1926.451(f)(12)).

29 CFR 1926.451(f)(1)

5 Look up and look around

Check overhead for beams, pipes, ductwork, ceilings and power lines before you raise the platform. Keep your body inside the rails so you cannot be pinched against something above you. Under the scaffold rules, scaffolds and any conductive material handled on them must stay clear of energized power lines unless the utility has been notified and has acted (29 CFR 1926.451(f)(6)). Watch the path behind you too when you drive.

29 CFR 1926.451(f)(6)

6 Protect people below and plan the rescue

Barricade the area under the lift. In addition to wearing hard hats, employees on a scaffold must be protected from falling tools and debris (29 CFR 1926.451(h)(1)). Know how to lower the platform from the ground and who will do it. Plan how you would get a worker down if the controls failed.

29 CFR 1926.451(h)(1)

Scenario

Picture this: A crew is running conduit along a warehouse ceiling from a scissor lift. The floor has a small drain grate and some loose screws. To reach a bracket, a worker steps up on the mid-rail while a coworker below holds a ladder. The platform is above a spot where forklifts pass. Nobody looked at the pipe running just under the ceiling. What should they have done differently?

Crew discussion

1. Which scissor lifts do we use, and who is trained on each one?
2. What is on our pre-use checklist for a scissor lift?
3. Where are the overhead hazards near lift work on this site?
4. How would we rescue someone stuck in a raised lift?

Bottom line **Be trained, inspect first, stay inside the rails on level ground, and look up before the platform goes up.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Scissor lift safety / Seguridad con elevadores de tijera

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____ Location / Lugar _____ Company / Empresa _____

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