Up, Up and Away: The Right Way to Use Personnel Lifts

As an electrical contractor, you might perform your work below or above ground — sometimes way, way above ground. You may rely on scissor lifts, forklifts with platforms, or articulating boom lifts to access hard-to-reach places high in the air.

If you don't take the right precautions, scissor lifts, forklifts with platforms, and articulating boom lifts can be dangerous.

Employees must undergo safety training before using all three, and supervisors should periodically observe employees to ensure they follow that training.

Safety tips

1. **Heed weather warnings**: Do not use personnel lifts during high winds or storms.
2. **Beware of ground conditions**: Personnel lifts must have a stable, dry surface to operate on.
3. **Do an inspection and test**: Before every use, examine the machine to ensure no parts are broken or missing. Test the lift to confirm everything works.
4. **Wear the right gear**: This typically includes a hard hat, boots, tool lanyards and safety glasses.
5. **Keep it uncluttered:** Avoid excess tools or equipment on the lift.
6. **Fall protection**: Guardrails and or personal fall protection is required (articulating boom lifts require both)
7. **Avoid ladders and standing on or leaning over guardrails**: Reposition the lift or get a taller one.
8. **Follow capacity warnings**: Carefully follow the manufacturer's load requirements.
9. **Don't drive around the site**: Operators shouldn't drive while the lift is elevated. The slightest bump could send you tumbling.
10. **Practice on-the-ground safety**: Keep personnel clear of lifts to avoid being struck by the vehicle or falling objects.
11. **Route planning:** Ensure that there is adequate clearance from power lines, vehicles, or other hazards and use spotters.

Pinnacol Assurance is committed to providing you the resources you need to stay safe. For more information, review Pinnacol's Safety Resources available by industry and hazard.

SOURCES:

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/scaffolding/construction.html

https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/safety-topics/forklifts/

https://www.lhsfna.org/index.cfm/lifelines/fall-2002/aerial-lifts-significant-factor-in-laborer-fatalities/