



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY  
EXPERIMENT STATION

# MAFES DAWG TRACKS

Aerial lifts are vehicle-mounted work platforms used to elevate people for easier access to high job sites; for example - roof work or even changing out lightbulbs in those hard to reach ceilings areas. While arguably safer than scaffolding, there are hazards related to aerials lifts, so heed a few essential safety precautions.

**Ensure operators are trained & understand the hazards** – Be familiar with manufacturer guidelines and understand how all the controls operate and react. If you are renting a lift, ask the business you are renting it from to help you become familiar with that specific machine's functions. Take some time to become comfortable with the lift in an open, safe area before performing job task with it.

**Inspect the lift & the surrounding work area prior to operation** – Like any other equipment, check the lift's fluid levels, operating controls & safety features before use. But examining the work area is equally as important. Look for overhead hazards (ceiling heights, obstructions such as low light fixtures or beams, or electrical lines). Be aware of floor/ground the lift is on; look for unstable surfaces, slopes, bumps, holes, ditches, or debris. High winds and severe weather conditions are major hazards to watch out for that can tip over or otherwise endanger your employees.

**Do not surpass reach and weight limits** - Take the time to calculate weight before loading and operating your aerial lift. And remember to take into account the combined weight of the operator, tools, and materials. Also remember, the weight limits decrease as the height increases and as reach is extended.



**Don't sit or climb on the edge of the platform** - Guardrails are meant to protect workers from falling and should not be used to climb on or sit. Doing so puts employees at risk of falling and/or the lift at risk of tipping. If slightly out of reach, it's safest to lower the lift and move the entire machine a few feet than to risk a serious injury.

**Ensure the lift stays in place** – Use outriggers and brakes for a layer of stability, even if the ground appears stable. Wheel chocks are also advised if working on an incline. Scissors lifts, because of their design, should not be moved while extended and should not be used with other equipment in the area (as a slight bump could cause them to tip).

**Clear workers and pedestrians from the base and surrounding area of a boom lift** - Clear the entire circumference of the lift's reach prior to starting any work and set up work zone warnings to warn others and to keep the area clear. Falling material or a dropped tool is a high safety risk for those below.

**Wear a full body harness** – If an aerial lift is struck by another vehicle or large object, anyone not wearing a harness could be thrown from the lift. Also have a suitable lanyard that is latched to the appropriate anchor – not a guardrail.

For more info contact:

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## Sources:

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