Safety Talk

APRIL 2025

Aerial Lift Safety

Aerial lifts include scissor lifts, bucket trucks, and cherry pickers. Here are some reasons why each year workers are killed or injured while using these machines.

- They were not wearing a fall protection harness and fell out of the basket.
- They fell with the equipment when it tipped over due to improper loading.
- They were electrocuted when the equipment came in to contact with energized power lines.

Before operating an aerial lift:

- Check operating and emergency controls to ensure they function properly.
- Visually inspect the machinery for leaking hydraulic fluid, fuel or air.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and Set Brakes, Deploy Outriggers, and use Wheel Chocks even when on a level surface.
- Never exceed the manufacturer's ground slope angle working limits.
- If working near traffic, set up cones and signs to establish a work zone.
- Inspect the work area for ground hazards such as potholes, bumps, loose soil or debris that could cause the lift to shift or tip over.
- Maintain an adequate clearance of 20 feet from overhead power lines unless you have confirmed that they have been deenergized.
- Inspect personal fall protection equipment for damage. This includes your harness, lanyards, and the anchor point. Damaged items should be replaced immediately.

While operating the lift.

- Always close lift-platform chains or doors.
- Always wear fall arrest equipment tied off to a designated anchor point.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor of the lift. Never climb the guardrails.
- Never exceed the equipment's load limit rating.
- Do Not drive an aerial lift with the boom extended unless the unit is specifically designed for that purpose.
- Check the weather and cease operation in the event of strong winds and thunder storms.

Prior to Operating the Equipment <u>READ and FOLLOW</u> the Manufacturer's Operation and Safety Manuals for Inspecting and Using the Equipment.

Fire Department Connection

A fire department connection (FDC) is an inlet and pipe system that enables a responding fire department to supplement a fire sprinkler system's water supply.

In the event of a fire, the emergency responders can connect a hose line from their pumper truck to the FDC and pump additional water into the fire sprinkler system to ensure sufficient water supply and water pressure to suppress the fire in the building effectively.

The FDC is not intended to provide a specific amount of water, not to provide the sprinkler system's full demand. Fire sprinkler systems that are designed to be NFPA 13 compliant typically get their water from the facility's domestic water supply.

However, supplementation from a pumper truck via the FDC will help ensure a sufficient supply and will also act as a backup in the instance that:

- The domestic water supply delivers an inadequate amount of water.
- A valve is erroneously closed between the domestic water supply and the sprinkler system preventing water from reaching the system during a fire.
- A change to the facility's occupancy since the fire sprinkler was installed poses a more significant hazard than the original sprinkler system was designed to handle.

In any of the above scenarios, the availability and use of the FDC can make the difference between a successfully suppressed fire that does little damage and a total loss of the facility.

FDCs are required for all fire sprinkler systems and standpipe systems (the pipes which enable firefighters to connect and use their hoses within a structure) according to NFPA 13 and NFPA 14.

FDC Inspection and Service Requirements:

NFPA requires that the FDC should be flushed every 5 years to ensure that it is free of materials and blockages that could prevent water from reaching the sprinkler system.

NFPA 13 recommends that the piping connecting the exterior FDC and its check valve should be hydrostatically tested just as the balance of the system is tested.

Quarterly Inspections Performed by the Building Owner:

- Must undergo quarterly inspections
- Be accessible and visible
- Swivels or couplings must be able to rotate smoothly and be free of damage
- Caps/plugs must be properly installed and undamaged
- Identification signs must be correctly placed and readable
- Check valves must be operational and free of leaks
- Automatic drain valve is correctly placed and operating properly

Distracted Driving Awareness

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

Join the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) distracted driving campaign by spreading this lifesaving message:

Don't Drive Distracted. Eyes Forward.

- Distracted driving is any activity that takes the driver's attention away from the task of safe driving. Staying focused on the road is key to driving safely.
- Using a cell phone while driving is a risky driving behavior that poses a danger not only to vehicle occupants but pedestrians, bicyclists and other motorists.
- Texting and cell phone use while driving has become the most prevalent type of distracted driving.
- Texting while driving is illegal in 49 states including Tennessee.
- Handheld phone use is prohibited while driving in Tennessee.
- Cellphone use by novice drivers is banned in 36 states and the District of Columbia.

Safety Tips for Drivers

- If you are expecting a text message or need to send one that can't wait, pull over and park your car in a safe location before using your device.
- Designate your passenger as your "designated texter." Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Struggling to not text and drive? Activate your phone's "Do Not Disturb" feature, or put your cell phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of your vehicle until you arrive at your destination.
- When getting behind the wheel, be an example to your family and friends by putting your phone away. You may see other people doing it, but that doesn't mean texting and driving is a "normal" acceptable or safe behavior.
- Listen to your passengers: If they see you texting while driving and tell you to put your phone away, put it down.

For more information, visit www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving.

Protect Property from Fire Hazards

In 2023, there were almost 100,000 commercial structure fires resulting in over $2 billion in property damage in the United States. What can you and your employees do to mitigate risk and prevent potential fire damage.

Install and Activate Fire Protection Systems

The most obvious step to prevent fires is a fire protection and alert system such as smoke detectors, fire alarms and sprinklers. It isn't enough to just have these systems. Make sure you regularly test them and that the system you have is sufficient for your business's needs.

If you have an older building that was grandfathered to not require sprinkler systems, at a minimum your building should have smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. The majority of government buildings are classified as NFPA Group B buildings. Group B buildings do require warning devices to notify occupants of a fire emergency.

Create a Fire Safety Plan and Train Employees

Ensure your employees have been trained on what to do in case of a fire, including evacuation routes, the location of and how to use a fire extinguisher, and how to report fire hazards and risks.

Set Rules and Regulations for Fire Prevention:

- Train employees on the safe use of space heaters. Keep stored items at least 3 feet from space heaters. Space heaters should be plugged directly to a wall outlet and not to surge protectors.
- Designate an outside smoking area and make sure it is equipped with fire-resistant disposals.
- Do not allow employees to connect multiple surge protectors together.
- Do not run power cords/extension cords through walls and ceilings.
- Ensure electrical sources and heat sources are not covered by potentially combustible items.
- Ensure exits are clear of any stored items.
- Conduct regular safety walkthroughs to identify any potential fire hazards.

APRIL 2025 QUIZ

TRUE or FALSE

1. Buildings are not required to have any type of fire warning device.
True or False

2. FDCs should be visible and accessible.
True or False

3. FDCs should be flushed every 6 years.
True or False

4. Before operating an aerial lift, you must check the operating and emergency controls.
True or False

5. If you must send a text message, pull your vehicle over and park in a safe location before using your device.
True or False

Answers

1. False 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. True