

Falls from Elevating Work platforms

Attention: Employers and employees who use elevating work platforms such as aerial lifts, boom-supported elevating work platforms, articulating-boom work platforms, and extendable-boom work platforms in Washington State.

Danger – Falls from a bucket

In the past five years, there have been seven incidents in Washington State involving workers falling from elevating work platforms that resulted in serious injuries and/or death. The common theme in these incidents was workers not using fall protection or not being properly tied off, which can save lives.

Workers operating inside buckets are at risk of being ejected or bounced out of the buckets to the ground below when:

- Moving the lifting equipment from one area to another.
- The lifting equipment is struck by a motor vehicle.
- The bucket gets lodged in objects.
- The lifting equipment suddenly shifts due to being operated on grades, side slopes or ramps that exceed the manufacturer's recommendations.

What should I do to protect my workers?

- Provide training on the set-up and use of elevating work platforms.
- Implement a traffic control plan after determining if flaggers or other means of traffic control such as barriers, cones, and signage are necessary to protect workers operating near motor vehicles.
- Choose the appropriate fall protection system based on the equipment manufacturer's specification.



When using different types of elevating platforms, refer to manufacturer's operation manual.

How can I prevent falls from aerial lifts on my worksites?

- Ensure that all persons working in the bucket of the elevating work platform wear fall protection fixed to the manufacturer-provided and approved attachment points.
- Ensure that the manufacturer's operational manual is available onsite for reference by operators.



Traffic control measures, like the barrier cones used in this picture, can prevent motor vehicles from coming into contact with elevating work platform.

Photo courtesy of: WSDOT/Flickr.



Know the safety rules to prevent employee exposure from falls from elevating work platforms

You must:

- Prohibit unqualified workers from operating elevating work platforms.
- Have the operator survey the area before using the elevating work platform to look for hazards such as untamped earth fills, ditches, drop-offs, debris, overhead obstructions and electrical conductors, weather conditions, and unauthorized persons in the area.
- Make sure that the operator does a prestart inspection of the components or system of the elevating work platform prior to use.
- Make sure that a qualified person examines or tests any items found during the inspection that are thought to be unsafe.
- Have the operator make sure the elevating work platform is on a surface that is within the limits specified by the manufacturer. Be certain that outriggers, stabilizers, extendable axles, or other stability enhancing methods are used as required by the manufacturer.

For more information, please see “Personnel Hoisting and Personnel Platforms” located in the Safety & Health website.

Other resources you can access

Get an **electronic** copy of this [Hazard Alert](#).

Visit the L&I [Safety Web page](#).

Contact your local L&I office or visit the [safety rules webpage](#) for other related rules

Find the nearest [L&I office](#).

How can I get help from Labor & Industries?

The Department of Labor & Industries provides consultations, training, and technical assistance at no cost to employers. Call today to schedule a [free confidential consultation](#) for more information.

You may also call 1-800-423-7233 or visit a local L&I office and ask for the Consultation Manager.

*This alert was developed by L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSHS) to alert employers, labor groups, and employees to potential hazards associated with work activities. **This is not a rule and creates no new legal obligations.** The information provided includes suggested guidance on how to avoid workplace hazards and describes relevant mandatory safety and health rules. DOSHS recommends you also check the related rules for additional requirements.*