

Risk Alert



Listening. Learning. Leading.®

Personnel aerial lifts require special care, regular maintenance and training

The high ceilings in worship centers, gymnasiums and fellowship halls make many simple maintenance tasks, such as changing light bulbs, more difficult and dangerous.

Many ministries utilize personnel aerial lifts to reach the necessary heights to complete the job. When used properly by trained personnel, aerial/vertical personnel lifts are safe for such duty. However, when safety features are ignored or removed, or the equipment is used by someone unfamiliar with the operating procedures, the lifts can lead to fatal accidents.

Outriggers—a requirement for some lifts

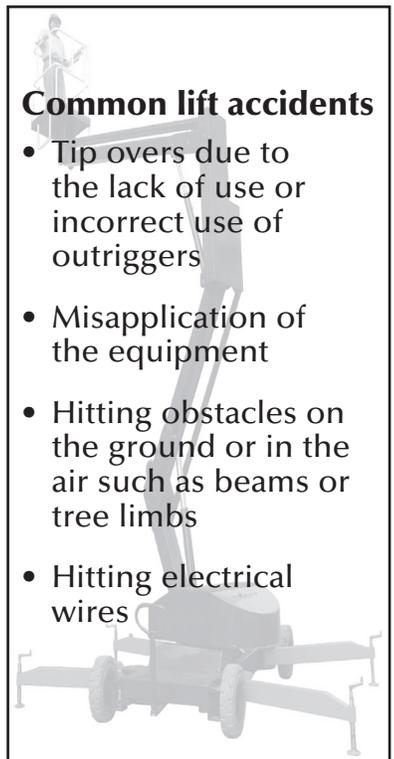
Whether you're using a lift to reach eight feet or 20 feet, all safety equipment, especially the outriggers (if provided), needs to be used. Although the base of a lift might seem heavy enough to support an individual, once the platform has been extended up or at an angle, the lift can easily tip over.

Outriggers should extend in all four directions from the base of the lift to stabilize the equipment. Refer to the manufacturer's operating manual of the lift for details and instructions.

All users need to receive proper training

All lifts have an operator's manual for the use and maintenance of the specific lift. If you do not have a manual for your lift, contact the manufacturer to order one and review it upon receipt. Stop using the lift until you can verify the safe and proper use of the lift.

The manual should remain with the lift so operators can easily use it as a resource when they have a question. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for training and operating the lift. Only trained, authorized personnel should operate the personnel lift. If a professional trainer is recommended, contact a vendor that sells the equipment in your area.



Common lift accidents

- Tip overs due to the lack of use or incorrect use of outriggers
- Misapplication of the equipment
- Hitting obstacles on the ground or in the air such as beams or tree limbs
- Hitting electrical wires

(Over)

Always inspect before using

An inspection of the lift should be conducted prior to every use, and a maintenance log should be kept. Other safety tips include:

- Keep the equipment secured to prevent unauthorized use
- Do not make repairs to the lift if you are not capable
- Always use the manufacturer's approved replacement parts
- Do not modify the equipment in any way
- If a lift is donated to your ministry, have it professionally inspected before using

Regardless of the user, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will apply its regulations in the event of an accident. All employers, including religious organizations, are required to provide a safe and healthful workplace for their employees and volunteers. Workplace accidents can lead to OSHA fines involving thousands of dollars.

For a complete collection of the *Risk Alert* series, visit our website and look in the Safety Resources section.