

Aerial Lifts: Tie Off in the Basket

About 10 minutes to deliver

Boom lifts throw people out; scissor lifts tip over. Different machines, different rules, and the tie-off question people get wrong.

Two machines, two sets of rules, and mixing them up is how people get hurt.

BOOM LIFTS

A boom lift is an aerial lift under 1926.453. It can be bumped, it can bounce, and the classic fatality is a worker catapulted out of the basket when the boom is struck or drops into a hole.

- Tie off inside the basket, every time. 1926.453(b)(2)(v) requires a lanyard attached to the boom or basket. The standard's own text still says "body belt", but the note to that paragraph is clear that since 1998 body belts are not acceptable for fall arrest — so use a full body harness.
- Anchor to the manufacturer's point in the basket. Not the guardrail, not the structure you are working on. If the lift moves and you are tied to the building, the machine takes you apart.
- Short lanyard. Long enough to work, short enough that you cannot get out over the rail.
- Both feet on the floor of the basket. No standing on the rail, no ladder or plank in the basket.
- Brakes set, outriggers on pads or solid ground, chocks where required. Load limits are not advisory.

SCISSOR LIFTS

A scissor lift is not an aerial lift — it is a mobile scaffold, regulated under 1926.451. The guardrails are the fall protection, so as long as they are up and the chain or gate is closed, a harness is not required unless the manufacturer says so.

What kills people on scissor lifts is tipping and crushing:

- Guardrails up and gate closed before the platform moves.
- Level, firm ground. Most tip-overs happen on a slope, a soft shoulder, or the edge of a slab.
- Do not move it elevated unless it is designed for that, and never with someone leaning out.
- Look up. Crushing between the platform rail and a beam, joist or duct is the other way these kill.

BOTH MACHINES

Look up before you go up: overhead power lines, structures, and anything else in the arc. Inspect the machine and the ground first, and know how to use the ground controls to bring somebody down.

ASK THE CREW

- Which machine are we on today, and does that mean harness or guardrails?
- What are we anchoring to inside the basket?
- Who on the ground knows how to work the emergency lowering controls?

29 CFR 1926.453 · 29 CFR 1926.451 · 29 CFR 1926.502

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Aerial Lifts: Tie Off in the Basket

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Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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