

Question of the week: *Does my crew have to wear fall protection harnesses while working in a scissor lift?* Fall protection is provided by standard guardrails in scissor lift platforms. If the guardrails do not meet OSHA specifications or if there is a possibility of workers being thrown from the platform Personal Fall Arrest systems are required. Read about the rest below.

Construction vehicle safety

One in four “struck by vehicle” deaths involve construction workers, more than any other occupation. Read the Vehicle Safety Article below for training tips and vehicle requirements.

The Confusion About Scissor Lifts

Scissors lifts are common equipment on jobsites. They are used to safely lift workers, tools, and materials to various heights. In the past, there has been some confusion over the requirements for fall protection when using scissors lifts

What are the requirements?

Employees using scissors lifts need to be qualified to operate the equipment.

Employees on a scissors lift must be protected by a guardrail system capable of withstanding, without failure, a force applied in any downward or horizontal direction at any point along its top edge of at least 200 pounds. Scissors lifts are usually manufactured with guardrail systems. If the guardrail system meets the minimum 200-pound top rail capacity, then employees don't need to wear personal fall arrest equipment.

If the guardrail system is less than adequate, or the worker leaves the safety of the work platform, an additional fall protection device is required.

Employers will also want to be familiar with the applicable fall protection requirements if they are going to have employees use fall protection.

Employees do not have to tie-off on scissors lifts equipped with guardrails. They are required to tie-off when in the scissor lift basket if there is the chance they could be bounced out of the basket, or to keep them from climbing out of the basket.

Remember, all of the requirements for scaffolds also pertain to scissors lifts. The scaffolding regulation has its own training requirements.

Is traffic under control at your jobsites?

Are vehicle safety practices observed at your jobsites? Do your employees risk being pinned between construction vehicles and walls, struck by swinging excavators, crushed beneath overturned vehicles, or being injured by other similar accidents? If you work near public roadways, are your employees at risk of being struck by trucks or cars?

These are real hazards at most jobsites. By observing the following Cal/OSHA requirements and your company's best practices for traffic control, your jobsites can be safe work environments.

What are the OSHA requirements?

Vehicle safety

Knowledgeable and safe construction equipment operators means safe jobsite traffic. For safe vehicle traffic, train your operators to:

- Check vehicles before each shift to assure that all parts and accessories are in safe operating condition.
- Wear seat belts when required.

- Never allow fellow workers to ride on construction vehicles unless there is a safe and authorized place for them to sit.
- Drive vehicles or equipment only on roadways or grades that are safely constructed and maintained.
- Not drive a vehicle in reverse when there is an obstructed view to the rear, unless it has an audible reverse alarm, or another worker signals that it is safe.
- Ensure other employees are in the clear before using dumping or lifting devices.
- Lower or block bulldozer and scraper blades, end-loader buckets, dump bodies, etc., when not in use, and leave all controls in the neutral position.
- Never exceed a vehicle's rated load or lift capacity.

Brake requirements

- Ensure your operators set the parking brake when vehicles and equipment are parked, and chock the wheels if they are on an incline.
- All motor vehicles and mechanized equipment used in construction are required to have:
- A service brake system for slowing or stopping the vehicle during normal operations.
- An emergency brake system as a back-up in the event that the service brake fails.
- A parking brake system, sometimes referred to as a hand brake.
- It is permissible for these systems to share components, but in all cases, they are each required to be maintained in good working condition, e.g. if the service brake and parking brake are working, they do not make up for a defective emergency brake.

Work zone safety

- When work zones are necessary at your jobsite, you must:
- Use traffic signs, barricades, or flaggers when construction takes place near public roadways.
- Ensure workers are highly visible in all levels of light. Warning clothing, such as red or orange vests, is required, and if worn for night work, must be of reflective material.

Profile of a crushed-by accident

- A contractor was operating a backhoe when an employee attempted to walk between the swinging boom of the backhoe and a concrete wall. As the employee approached from the operator's blind side, the boom hit the victim, crushing him against the wall. Employees had not been trained in safe work practices, and no barricades had been erected to prevent employee access to a hazardous area.
- A worker was driving a front-end loader up a dirt ramp onto a lowboy trailer. The tractor was not centered and the tread slipped off the trailer. When the tractor began to tip, the operator jumped from the cab. As he hit the ground, the tractor's rollover protective structure fell on top of him, crushing him. The tractor was not equipped with seatbelts.