

Longshoring Safety Matters

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Aerial Lift Fall Protection

Longshoring work often uses aerial lifts on and off deck. These lifts have their own set of risks that become more dangerous when working in and around a large body of water.

Aerial lifts can be subject to sudden horizontal and vertical movements that could potentially eject you from the platform when in use or moving. Take the proper safety measures in order to avoid a fall.

Ways to Stay Safe

Safety should be your number one concern when using an aerial lift in a longshoring environment.

- Always use aerial lifts according to the manufacturer's guidelines. If all safety precautions are followed, the chances of a fall are minimal.
 - Only operate an aerial lift if you are authorized to do so.
 - Always stand firmly on the floor of the lift. Do not sit or climb on the baskets or guardrails.
 - Never use planks, ladders or other items to elevate yourself above the basket.
 - Do not move the lift vehicle if there is a worker elevated in the basket.
 - Be aware of list, trim and lash down points on the barge as well as the swing radius of the boom.
 - When the lift is elevated, never get between structures and the lift. This could trap and crush you.
 - Use stops to prevent the lift from moving or driving off an open edge.
 - Use caution to avoid getting the lift caught on a boat, lines or other objects.
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Extra Fall Protection

As a dockworker, you should wear a personal flotation device (PFD) when doing work where there is a risk of falling into water.

However, remember that a PFD alone will not help if you fall from a height of 40 or more feet. Always use a personal fall arrest system, and always tie off, or connect yourself directly or indirectly to an anchorage.

The Importance of Tying Off

You should tie off to reduce the risk of injury or death in case of ejection from the lift. According to OSHA, half of all fatal falls from aerial lifts happen when workers are not tied off.

Use a personal fall arrest system with the lanyard of the body harness or restraining belt attached to the boom or basket.

Do not tie off to an adjacent structure. If the lift is lowered and you forget you are tied to something other than the boom or basket, you could be ejected.

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