

SCISSOR LIFT & VERTICAL MAST ELEVATED WORK PLATFORMS BEST PRACTICES

Many public agencies either own a motorized scissor lift or vertical mast mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) or periodically lease such equipment. Working at heights is one of the most common factors in occupational injuries. Safely working on elevated surfaces starts with effective training. This bulletin discusses regulations, best practices, and training of workers on MEWP where the platform moves vertically but stays inside the chassis. These lifts include push-around vertical mast lifts (ANSI Class 1A), self-propelled vertical mast lifts (ANSI Class 3A), and scissor lifts (ANSI Class 3A).



Push Around Vertical Mast Lift



Self-Propelled Vertical Mast Lift



Scissor lift

We should start by understanding the two agencies that produce safety and operational rules. OSHA is a federal regulatory agency whose Scaffold Standard is the minimum level of protection for workers. Depending on the work being performed, the use of the scissor lift or vertical mast MEWP will fall under the OSHA General Industry Standards ([1910.27](#)) or OSHA Construction Standards ([1926 Subpart L](#), specifically [1926.451](#), [1926.452\(w\)](#), and [1926.454](#)). Essentially, they are the same Standard as 1910.27(a) states, “Scaffolds used in general industry must meet the requirements in 29 CFR part 1926, subpart L”.

The second standard employers must consider is the national consensus standard A92 Safe Use of Mobile Elevating Work, published by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). And lastly, employers must follow the procedures in the manufacturer’s owner’s manual (MOM). PEOSH inspectors can cite the employer for failing to meet these documents under the General Duty Clause.

A fundamental responsibility of the employer is to select the proper equipment for a task. Scissor lifts and vertical mast MEWP are available in different operating heights, widths (important if going through doors is required to reach the work area), and weight capacities. Although not a part of this bulletin, choosing between a scissor lift or aerial boom lift must be carefully thought through.

Employers who use a scissor lift or vertical mast MEWP must have a written policy that provides general and employer-specific safe operating procedures, fall protection, training program, and emergency procedures. A Scissor Lift and Vertical Mast Model Template Policy is available on the Resources page on the Safety tab of the NJCE.org site. The model policy can easily be modified to meet your agency’s circumstances.

Only trained and authorized employees may operate a scissor lift or vertical mast MEWP. When purchasing a unit, your agency should include training in the bidding specs. If permitted, record the session so it can be used for future operator training. Many manufacturers have a YouTube channel that contains educational videos.

When leasing a MEWP, the rental agency typically does not provide training unless purchased separately. The employer is responsible for providing training for the operator.

Many accidents involving MEWPs are caused by operator error. Comprehensive training is the most effective means to prevent these accidents. The NJCE/JAM provides the following resources to assist employers in training Scissor Lift and Vertical Mast MEWP:

- [Scissor Lifts in Industrial and Construction Environments](#), available on-demand on the [NJCE Learning Management System](#).
- [Scissor Lift & Vertical Mast Elevated Work Platforms Hands-On Operator Training Evaluation Form](#)
- [Scissor Lift & Vertical Mast Elevated Work Platforms Operator Quiz](#)
- [Scissor Lift & Vertical Mast Elevated Work Platforms- Worksite & Pre-Use Inspection Form](#)