



September 4 — Don't Reach Beyond the Safe Working Area

An employee was using a scissors lift to rig equipment being offloaded in the shop. He was properly using PPE while in the scissor lift but as he reached to connect a shackle, he stepped up onto the toe plate. This could lead to a fall or to a foot injury.

I stopped the employee immediately and told him to step back down to the lift floor and to raise the lift instead. He complied without complaint and soon after we had a conversation about proper lift usage and fall prevention policies

The safest position is the one the equipment was designed for.

An employee was using a scissor lift to rig equipment being offloaded in the shop. The employee was wearing the proper PPE, but while reaching to connect a shackle, they stepped onto the toe plate of the scissor lift.

The employee was stopped immediately and instructed to step back down onto the lift floor and raise the lift to the proper working height. The employee complied, and proper lift usage and fall prevention were discussed.

The toe plate is not an extension of the work platform. Stepping onto it changes the employee's footing and balance and can make it easier to lose their position while reaching or handling the load. If the work cannot be safely reached from the platform floor, the answer is to reposition or raise the lift—not to climb higher on the lift.

Hazards

- Falling from the scissor lift
- Foot or leg injury
- Loss of balance while reaching
- Improper use of the lift
- Increased exposure while working at height
- Potential injury while rigging equipment

Words of Wisdom

If you can't safely reach the work, don't reach farther—reposition the equipment. A safe work platform only works when you stay within its intended working area.

Pause and Think

- Are you keeping both feet on the lift floor while working?
- What should you do if you cannot safely reach the work?
- Could stepping onto the toe plate cause you to lose your balance?
- Are you using the lift to position yourself at the proper working height?
- Are you willing to stop and reposition the lift rather than take a shortcut?

Closing Thought

A few extra inches of reach aren't worth the risk of a fall. Position the lift correctly and keep yourself safely on the platform.