

Aerial Lift Fall Protection

Technical Brief FP-GS003



OSHA rules and current industry best practice in fall protection for aerial lift devices call for the operator of the lift to remain behind the guard rails with both feet on the floor of the platform at all times.

Additional protection is provided by the use of a personal restraint and/or fall arrest system. Fall restraint can prevent a worker from being ejected from the elevated work platform. This is especially important when repositioning the lift. Most aerial lift manufacturers advise against using lifts for access to a work location outside of the lift. The transition into and out of an aerial lift platform is especially hazardous. Lift manufacturers caution strongly against the practice of stepping onto the guard rails when working in an elevated work platform.

MSA Latchways and Workman Mini PFLs are approved for use in aerial lifts provided the hazards described below are considered. In addition, the user is advised to perform an evaluation by a Competent Person for other fall related hazards unique to the application.

- Avoid exposing the lifeline to working over an exposed sharp edge. Sharp edges may cut the line. However, the rounded bars of a guard rail are acceptable for the line to pass over provided the energy absorbing end of the device is worn at the user's back. See table below.
- A fall out of the platform can result in a swing-fall hazard, with the potential for the worker to strike the boom of the aerial lift device or other objects in the path of the fall.
- When a Mini PFL is used in a boom lift with the boom extended horizontally, the forces of a fall can cause the extended boom to flex. This oscillating movement can cause a "ratcheting effect" in the locking mechanism of the Mini PFL which may lead to greater fall distances.
- The Mini PFL must be attached to a certified anchor point within the platform of the lift.

Device	Orientation of Use	User Weight Capacity Limit	Clearance Below Platform
Latchways Mini PFL	Device housing on harness	220 lbs (100kg)	8ft / (2.5m)
Workman Mini PFL	Device housing on anchorage point	310 lbs (140kg)	8ft / (2.5m)
		400 lbs (180kg)	9ft / (2.7m)

For further reading, the Aerial Work Platform Industry has created a document with detailed recommendations regarding fall protection for aerial work platform equipment. That document can be accessed at the following address.

<http://www.ipaf.org/en/publications/personal-fall-protection>

