

## Using Boom Lifts Near Power Lines

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Working from a boom lift or cherry picker comes with its share of potential hazards. These risks are compounded when you add power lines to the mix. Electrocution from contacting power lines is responsible for nearly half of all boom lift-related deaths. When performing electrical work with a lift, it is extremely important that you use the proper precautions to keep yourself and those around you safe from unnecessary injury.

### ***Basic Precautions***

In any situation where a boom lift or cherry picker is used, there are some basic precautions to keep in mind:

- Test the lift controls each day prior to use to ensure that they are in the proper working order.
- Wear a body belt as part of a tethering or restraint system with a lanyard attached to the boom or basket.
- Do not exceed the boom and basket load limit set by the manufacturer.
- Never climb or sit on the sides of the basket; always keep your feet firmly planted on the floor.
- Avoid sudden, jerky movements that could cause the basket to collide with nearby objects, such as power lines.

### ***Proper Protective Equipment***

When working on or near lines, use the following personal protective equipment:

- Insulated hard hat
- Voltage-rated shoes
- Rubber gloves and sleeves
- Insulated tools

### ***Insulated Buckets***

Boom lifts designed for electrical work have additional insulation to protect against electrical currents. However, the insulation may only protect certain parts of the lift.

- A basket liner only protects the portion completely covered by the liner. Conductive materials that extend beyond the liner can conduct electricity, rendering it ineffective. Most buckets have a small section at the top (which should be noted by the manufacturer) that uses metal for support and is not insulated.
- Never try to modify or alter the insulation on a basket. It could reduce its level of protection.

### ***When Working from the Ground***

While a majority of the dangers involved with boom lifts come from working in the basket, workers on the ground are also at risk for injury. To stay safe when working below or near a lift, keep the following in mind:

- Watch for falling objects when the boom is directly overhead.
- Avoid making unnecessary contact with the vehicle. If the operator in the bucket makes contact with a power line, electricity could be conducted through the lift.
- Always be conscious of the boom's movements. Alert the operator if you see potential hazards.
- Do not operate the boom from the ground unless there is an emergency.
- If performing work near a roadway, make sure that traffic is properly directed away from the lift. Collision with the lift can eject the operator from the basket or force the basket into nearby power lines.
- Be ready to respond in case the operator gets into trouble.

