



## Two Vehicle Mounted Work Platforms Overturn Killing the Operators- Massachusetts

**Background:** Vehicle mounted work platforms, also called aerial lifts, are used daily by workers to complete many tasks. Within a twelve-month period during 2001 - 2002, two Massachusetts workers were fatally injured in separate incidents when the rented vehicle mounted work platforms they were working from overturned. In both cases the outriggers had not been fully deployed during the use of the work platforms.

**Incident 1:** A structural engineer was fatally injured during an interstate viaduct inspection. The victim was conducting the inspection from a vehicle mounted work platform that had four out of the five outriggers fully deployed. The passenger side outrigger was deployed but **only partially extended due to an obstruction** on the ground. The work platform had been elevated approximately 50 feet up and over the passenger side direction. The ground below the elevated work platform sloped downwards approximately 30 feet from the area on which the vehicle was positioned. The vehicle tipped toward the passenger side, and the victim fell with the platform approximately 80 feet to the ground below.



Fully deploy outriggers onto pads or solid surfaces

**Incident 2:** An electrician was fatally injured while using a vehicle mounted work platform to install holiday lights at a city common. The vehicle's outriggers had been lowered onto pieces of plywood but **not extended outward**. At the time of the incident, the work platform had been elevated approximately 50 feet up and over the driver side. The truck tipped in that same direction and the victim fell with the platform approximately 50 feet to the ground below.

### Recommendations

#### To prevent similar incidents, employers should:

- ensure that outriggers are fully deployed and are set on pads or solid surfaces

#### Employers should also:

- provide employee training by a qualified person on the safe use of vehicle mounted work platforms as outlined in the manufacturer's operator's manual
- ensure that work site hazard analyses are performed prior to positioning the vehicle mounted work platform for use (this should include but not be limited to):
  - locating level ground (when possible) to position the vehicle
  - looking for holes, drop-offs, bumps and other ground obstructions
  - evaluating area above the work site for overhead power lines and other obstructions
- provide and ensure that employees are using the OSHA required fall protection equipment when in an elevated aerial lift

#### Vehicle mounted work platform rental companies should:

- provide copies of the operator's and maintenance manuals stored in a weather-resistant location on the aerial device
- perform a pre-rental inspection of both the vehicle and work platform
- ensure that the lessors have been trained on the proper use and operation of the specific aerial device being rented as outlined in the manufacturer's operator's manual

#### Vehicle mounted work platform manufacturers should:

- explore the possibility of incorporating interlocks that would prohibit operation of an aerial lift if the outriggers were not fully extended

#### References:

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standard: 29 CFR 1910.67 Vehicle-mounted elevating and rotating work platforms.  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standard: 29 CFR 1910.132 Personal Protective Equipment.  
The Center to Protect Workers' Rights, Aerial Lift Safety, Hazard Alert [www.cpwr.com/Hazardalert.htm](http://www.cpwr.com/Hazardalert.htm)



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# Please Post

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The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, in cooperation with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, conducts investigations of fatal work related injuries and occasionally serious non fatal injuries. The project, known as FACE (Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation), seeks to identify the factors that contribute to these occupational injuries. The Face Project will help in the development and use of improved safety measures for preventing occupational injuries in the future.

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