

Scissor Lifts: Overhead Crushing Hazards

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Why this matters

A scissor lift moves the worker toward beams, pipes and door frames. Protection depends on the whole movement path, not just the parking position.

Objective: Identify trapping points and verify the safe movement and assistance arrangement.

Key hazards or failure points

Overhead trapping; unexpected movement; traffic contact; poor visibility; failed controls; unsafe emergency lowering.

Practical controls

- Use trained, authorized operators and the actual model instructions. Select equipment and positioning that permit work without entering a crushing point.
- Separate traffic and people from the lift. Keep required guardrails effective and remain on the platform floor.
- Plan elevation and travel separately under model limits. Agree ground assistance, communication and the approved emergency response before use.

Verify It in the Field

The operator studies the whole platform and worker movement from safe positions, identifying overhead obstructions and changes along the route.

Complete prescribed pre-use and control checks in a cleared safe setup. Record results; never test a safety device against an obstruction.

Confirm designated assistance can access ground controls and use the model emergency procedure. Record communication and access limitations before elevation.

Stop and reassess

Hold use for uncertain clearance, failed controls, new obstructions or uncontrolled traffic. Stop safely; correct and rebrief before moving again.

Ask the crew

1. Where can the worker be trapped?
2. Which movement is permitted by this model?
3. Who can provide emergency assistance?

Use this HOP tool — Pre-job briefing: Before elevation, the operator describes the planned upward, downward and permitted travel movements. A coworker identifies overhead and side trapping points from a safe location. Agree where movement must stop and who provides assistance. Record unresolved clearance or access concerns before operating.

Sources: OSHA scissor-lift eTool; OSHA 1926.454: scaffold training. HOP concepts adapted from DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2 (June 2009). No claim to original U.S. Government work; no government endorsement implied.

Free next step: JHA/JSA planning and field-verification worksheet

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/scissor-lift-overhead-crushing