

SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET

SCISSOR LIFTS / DOCK LEVELLERS

This Information Sheet is one of a series produced by the LEIA Safety and Environment Committee on topics relevant to the Lift and Escalator Industry. Whilst every effort has been taken in the production of these sheets, it must be acknowledged that they should be read in conjunction with the relevant legislation, codes of practice etc. They should not be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law but guidance to it.

Introduction – Safety Issues

This Safety Information Sheet deals with issues associated with safe working on scissor lifts / dock levellers and covers a number of aspects that should be considered prior to and during work on this equipment. As with any other type of work, the hazards must first be assessed by risk assessment in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Before commencing work report to the client/ client representative, the location and proposed duration of the work on their site. This is particularly important when working in isolated locations.

Scissor Lifts and Dock Levellers

Scissor lifts and dock levellers are useful pieces of equipment but can be dangerous if not used or worked on correctly. For the purposes of this Information Sheet, scissor lifts and dock levellers are equipment that are designed to assist with the transporting of goods only, from one level to another without using conventional lifts. Scissor lifts used as a working platform are not considered here. For ease of comprehension, the term 'Scissor Lift' is used below to mean both dock levellers and scissor lifts.

Some general guidelines follow to assist in safe working practices

Any person working on scissor lifts must be competent and familiar with the equipment paying attention to potential hazards and making proper use of safeguards and safe working procedures.

The following safe working guidance summarises the risks associated with the service and repair of scissor lifts and recommend standards of safety to be met by those working on them. Although these standards are relevant to most types of scissor lifts equipment there may be installations which do not incorporate modern safety features.

The precautions contained here should be applied so far as reasonably practicable, when working on scissor lifts.

General Precautions

- Prior to commencing any work on a scissor lift, ensure the appropriate personnel are informed about the work to be carried out.
- A suitable and sufficient risk assessment should be carried out on the machine, the work area and environmental conditions. The area around the machine should be clear and free of obstructions or materials.
- The work area surrounding the scissor lift should be barriered off and a notice indicating that the equipment is out of order clearly displayed to prevent any unauthorised use of the lift e.g. loading by forklift.

- Consider the use of barriers to segregate the work area from vehicles if appropriate. Be particularly aware of reversing vehicles.
- Work on the machinery should not be carried out whilst it is in motion or is capable of intermittent motion.
- **NEVER WORK ON A LOADED PLATFORM**
- Isolate by locking-off and tagging-out (LOTO) the machinery before work is undertaken. If LOTO facilities are not available, other safeguards must be taken i.e. remove and secure fuses as well as activating more than one stop control.
- Safety devices, safety bars or any other equipment provided to ensure safe operation or maintenance should never be overridden.
- Keep fingers, hands and limbs away from nips, trapping points and other dangerous positions.
- The scissor lift should never be ridden unless the equipment was designed for such operation, and then only in the designated areas permitted for safety.
- Wear the appropriate PPE.

Working beneath the scissor lift

- Only competent persons should be allowed access to work beneath the platform.
- The biggest hazard when working on scissor lifts is the lack of temporary support for the platform whilst maintenance or repair is being undertaken within the mechanism.
- Ensure the appropriate prop or props are securely in place and that the unit is isolated before working beneath it.
- **Props are supplied by the manufacturer, are suitable for the task they are doing and are to be positioned in the clearly marked position(s) designated by the manufacturer.** These positions (sockets) are usually marked by different colour paint for ease of identification. If these positions are not visible seek information from the drawings for the equipment or from the maker.
- There are various types of prop to support scissor lifts during maintenance or repair – it is usual that there is only one type for a specific scissor lift – this should not be compromised. Props may be a single or paired item and if there is any doubt consult the manufacturer's instructions.
- **NEVER USE SAFETY PROPS TO SUPPORT A LOADED PLATFORM**
- Where no prop is available for the equipment an equivalent means must be employed to absolutely ensure the platform cannot descend especially when work is being carried out beneath it. If in doubt check with your manager – do not take chances.
- Where risk assessment requires the work to be a two person operation on the scissor lift, a safe system of work and communication must be implemented.
- Avoid going under the scissor lift if the repair can be undertaken safely through the access panel(s) in the platform.
- Continue the use of prop(s) when working on the periphery of the scissor lift i.e. the lift could sink when working on the safety trip bar.

- It is not recommended that repair work is carried out through the access hatch unless the scissor lift is in the down / closed position.

Warnings

- Always ensure that vertical prop(s) are positioned vertically.
- Never use vertical props to support mechanism cross shafts.
- Always ensure that warning signs relating to the use of props are displayed in a prominent position
- If you have any doubt about working under a scissor lift- DO NOT GO UNDERNEATH, but check with your supervisor or manager.

Completion of work

- Check all guarding is in position, secure and effective
- Ensure all tools, equipment and persons are removed from below the machinery
- Follow the manufacturer's procedure to remove the prop(s) from the scissor lift and return them to the designated storage position(s)
- Lower lift to its lowest position and isolate
- Remove all out of order notices and barriers
- Inform client / client representative work is complete

For any clarification of this information sheet contact your company Safety Advisor or the LEIA Safety and Training Manager.