

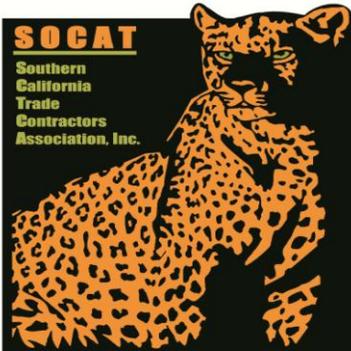
Southern California Trade Contractors Association, Inc.

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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Scissor Lifts



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Scissor Lifts – Uses, Safety Measures and Types

In order to aid construction projects for homes and other structures, a large amount of machinery is used. Each of which has specific uses and purposes. For instance, in order to lift equipment and men to work at higher levels, a vast range of lifts are used, such as boom lifts, scissors lifts, etc.

Scissor Lifts

A scissor lift is a platform that can be raised or lowered to a certain height to enable the workers to work at varying levels. This platform can only move vertically and is usually able to support a limited amount of weight. This machine gets its name from the scissor-like mechanism underneath the platform.

The beams that support the platform are in the form of criss-crossed lines forming an 'X' at every intersection. When the lift is raised, the criss-crossed beams open up and become elongated, giving the worker on the platform, access to the level he desires in order to work in a better way.

Scissor lifts use hydraulic, pneumatic or mechanical means for raising the

platform and the descent may or may not require any such processes. Sometimes, these machines contain a fail-safe mechanism which allows the worker to just simply release a pressure valve to lower the platform safely back to the ground.

Application of Scissor Lifts

These lifts can be used for both indoor as well as outdoor applications. There are some varieties which work well in both circumstances, whereas, there are others that are specifically designed for either one field of work. Scissor lifts can either be electrical or engine powered according to their varying designs and uses.

The major difference between indoor and outdoor scissor lifts is that indoor scissor lifts are usually electrical, having a slim design that can easily be maneuvered through aisles and are generally designed to work on leveled surfaces, whereas, outdoor scissor lifts are designed to withstand rougher terrains and can carry more weight as compared to indoor lifts.

In order to make outdoor lifts more durable and easy to maneuver in a wide array of terrains, it is often engine powered and has a more sturdy build to allow for more weight. These lifts also have heavy duty tires that can drive over rugged terrain to make sure that the work can be carried out properly.

Safety Measures for Scissor Lifts

As a safety measure, most scissor

lifts have platforms that are surrounded by guard rails to ensure that workers do not accidentally fall over the edge of the platform. A fixed weight limit is also designated by the manufacturers and the lift is not supposed to carry excess weight.

Since the platform is not covered completely, workers have a danger of hitting overhanging edges of higher levels and hence, they are advised to wear complete personal safety gear before working on scissor lifts. Some scissor lifts also have warning sensors regarding the tipping of the platform that can alert the workers of the danger and they can check to see if the platform is being overweighed on one side.

For the sake of protecting the workers from unexpected hurdles that they might find as the platform is raised, additional set of controls are usually provided on the platform itself so that the worker can move the platform effectively to avoid injury.

With outdoor scissor lifts, as they are used in rough terrains or slopes, additional supporting stabilizers and outriggers are provided. These enable the lifts to remain steady while the workers do their job, regardless of the terrain on which the lift is placed.

These lifts can conduct electricity which may result in electrocution of the workers who are on it and hence, workers are also cautioned to steer clear of overhead power lines when raising the scissor lifts.

Scissor Lift Specifications

Most manufacturers provide engine powered, heavy duty and rough terrain scissor lifts for outdoor projects while producing slim, electrical, and light weight models for indoor work.

Electrical indoor lifts are battery powered, and an increase in the maximum weight limit of the scissor lift, also results in an increase in the power provided by the battery to raise and uphold the platform in place. This means that the bigger the platform, the higher the power of the battery installed into it.

With a change in the size of the battery installed, the run-time of the indoor scissor lift is also affected. More power means more lifting capability, but it also indicates that the battery would probably be more long-lasting than other lifts having smaller battery power. Indoor scissor lifts are usually dual front wheel drives that can easily be maneuvered into tight spaces.

As mentioned above, in comparison to the indoor scissors lifts, outdoor lifts are powered by engines of various horsepower. Similar to indoor lifts, the outdoor ones also have a large range of models available that can carry differing quantities of maximum weight limit. With an increase in the weight limit, a sturdier and heavier built is required for outdoor rough terrain scissor lifts, and hence, more power is required to drive these lifts to the required construction areas.

Thus, outdoor lifts not only have

more power than the indoor ones, but they also vary in power among different models available by different companies. Furthermore, as outdoor scissor lifts frequently work on unlevelled and rough surfaces, they are installed with a four wheel drive system that can effectively move the lift on rugged terrain.

In conclusion, scissors lifts are essential for any construction site where workers need to move up and down on various levels in order to accomplish the work. They are also used indoors for industrial purposes and the indoor lifts are usually smaller in size and more appropriate for levelled terrains than the outdoor heavy-duty scissor lifts. Having electrical battery powered motors; these lifts can be very easy to maneuver due to their light weight and two-wheel drive system.

Outdoors lifts, on the other hand, require engine powered systems that can uphold the weight and work well with all kinds of terrain. They are often equipped with heavy-duty tires and stabilizers, and are four-wheel drive machines.

There are many companies in the market that are offering both, outdoor as well as indoor scissor lifts of varying weight limits. There are some companies that also offer indoor scissor lifts which can work just as effectively outdoors if the terrain is smooth and flat. So, if you are in the market to purchase a particular kind of scissor lift, then there is a wide range of scissor lifts to choose from.