

National Safety Stand – Down

To Prevent Injuries from Falls Grounds

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has announced May 2-6, 2016, as the official week for the third annual National Safety Stand Down. The event is a nationwide effort to remind and educate employers and workers of the serious dangers of falls that remain the leading cause of lost work-day and fatal injuries. Employers and workers are encouraged to pause during their workday for topic discussions, demonstrations and training on how to recognize hazards and prevent falls.

Villanova University participated in this initiative in 2014, and we're proud of the Certificate presented to us by OSHA. This year OSHA expects thousands of employers and possibly as many as four million workers to participate in the Stand Down.

The National Safety Stand Down in 2016 is part of the University's ongoing Fall Prevention Campaign, which provides employees with information and educational materials on how to prevent falls, provide the right equipment for our employees and train all employees on its proper use. Some of the initiatives the University will implement include:

- The release and implementation of a comprehensive Fall Protection Policy.
- Conducting Tool Box Talks by members of the Employee Safety Committee.
- University involvement in the OSHA initiative.
- Providing training for employees directly affected by fall potential, and education for the remaining staff.

For Grounds, I'm going to do an overview of the steps required to work safely from aerial work platforms. We work from ladders all the time, however, these mobile work platforms (including the bucket truck) have the greatest potential for serious injury in the event of a fall. So, let's look at the safety requirements for these platforms.

Fall Protection

- Assure that a guardrail system is in place before operating the lift.
- Only stand on the work platform; never stand on the guardrails.
- Keep work within easy reach to avoid leaning away from the lift.
- Wear the required PPE and tie-off only to approved tie-off points.

Stabilization

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe movement of the lift.
- Isolate the lift or implement traffic control measures to ensure that other equipment cannot contact the lift.
- Select work locations with firm, level surfaces away from hazards that can cause instability (e.g., drop-offs, holes, slopes, bumps, ground obstructions, manholes, telecommunications equip vaults, etc.)

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Grounds

Stabilization (cont'd)

- Use the lift outside only when weather conditions are good – we prohibit outdoor use of lifts when wind speeds exceed 25 mph and /or when lightening is expected. Use an anemometer to check the wind speed.
- Never allow the weight on the lift to exceed the manufacturer's load rating.

Positioning

- Position the lift to avoid crushing hazards.
- Be especially careful when passing under a fixed object.
- Maintain a distance of at least 10 feet from electrical lines.
- Implement traffic control measures around the lift to prevent other workers, or pedestrians from getting too close.
- Use ground guides when operating or moving the lift.

Maintaining Aerial Work Platforms

- Before each day or at the beginning of each shift perform a visual inspection and functional test.
- Verify that the brakes, once set, will hold the lift in position.
- Stop work immediately and notify your supervisor of any equipment malfunction.
- Ensure that the guardrail systems are in good working condition.

Training

- Only trained and certified workers are allowed to operate aerial work platforms.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for operating the lift and while in transit.

