

NATIONAL LIFT WEEK™

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Safety Saturday



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In the demanding world of today's complex fleet maintenance shops, most experts agree that one principle factor is at the core of every successful facility: safety.

This is especially true when it comes to lifting heavy duty (HD) commercial vehicles.



www.autolift.org

ALI Certification

To ensure maximum performance and operational safety, we recommend that all lifts be third-party tested and validated.

Specifically, all vehicle lifts should be certified by the Automotive Lift Institute (ALI). Certification, as ALI notes, "is a system whereby an independent, third-party organization determines that a manufacturer has the ability to produce a product that complies with a specific set of standards. Certification further authorizes the manufacturer to use the controlled label of the third party on listed products representing the certified model."

In the instance of vehicle lifts, maintenance facilities should insist on products that carry the coveted ALI Gold Label. It assures the user that a particular lift model is in electrical and mechanical compliance with established and agreed-upon standards, and in turn, advances the highest quality standards in the lifting industry.



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Capacity & Height

Facility managers must know in advance the weight of the heaviest vehicle they intend to lift and make absolutely certain that the lift selected is certified to meet or exceed that capacity. In terms of height, always measure the height clearance of the facility – prior to selecting a lifting system -- to ensure ample room to raise a vehicle for servicing. Always note the height of the tallest vehicle you intend to lift and make certain there is sufficient room to raise the vehicle to a proper height that will permit a technician to work comfortably underneath the vehicle.



Synchronization

Stability is also a key factor. That's why users should insist upon a lifting approach in which "synchronization" starts as soon as the lift goes into motion and continues through the full range of travel. In that way, it ensures safe and smooth lifting and lowering cycles, particularly in cases where the vehicle weight distribution is unequal, such as sweepers, mixers, fire trucks and other emergency vehicles.



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Proper Positioning

Operators can also ensure stability by proper lift positioning. For example, mobile column lifts should only be used on a firm foundation on level ground. And, if lifting takes place outdoors, technicians must be ever-alert to wind loads.

In addition, lift operators should make certain that forks on mobile columns, and contact points on in-ground lifts, are properly positioned prior to raising the vehicle. ALI recommends that prior to lifting to maximum height, operators first raise the vehicle 12 inches or less, pause, and then conduct a visual inspection of the entire perimeter of the partially raised vehicle prior to fully lifting the vehicle. This procedure may take a few extra seconds, but it's well worth it. After all, a lot is riding on your vehicle lift.



Culture of Safety & Servicing

Beyond the lifting system selected, creating a permanent, positive culture of safety is also essential to ensuring a safe fleet maintenance facility.

Service bulletins and safety messages should be prominently posted in public places and lift operators should be trained, and re-trained on a regular basis.

Finally, there is the all-important topic of vehicle lift servicing. Make certain that all lifts are subject to a regular program of planned maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended schedule and, that each lift in your facility receives an annual lift inspection by an ALI Certified Lift Inspector. Here is another example where ALI has really raised the bar on lift safety for the industry.



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www.autolift.org/dealer.php



ALI Lift Inspector Certification

With the launch of the Automotive Lift Institute's Lift Inspector Certification Program in October 2012, it became the first program of its type in North America to independently test and certify vehicle lift inspectors. The program is rigorous in its design and implementation, and as a result, when lift owners engage an ALI Certified Lift Inspector, they have powerful, third-party assurance that the inspector has been proven competent to thoroughly inspect the vehicle lifts they use every day.

That's safety!

Because fleet maintenance shops are busy, the pace is fast and the stakes are high, a well-designed, carefully planned approach to safe lifting is essential. It reduces downtime, ensures more vehicles remain on the road longer and provides for a safe working environment for today's busy fleet technicians.



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