



Aerial Work Platform
Equipment Maintenance:

Ensuring a Safe and Efficient Workplace





1 IN AERIAL LIFTS

AERIAL WORK PLATFORM EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE: Ensuring a Safe and Efficient Workplace

With a lasting economic downturn, it's more important than ever to ensure that you stay on budget and within deadlines. And while some delays are inevitable — those caused by extreme weather, for example — it's *preventing the preventable* that's crucial for maintaining efficiency.

So smart contractors and managers are increasingly focusing on proper equipment maintenance and operator training to diminish the risk of costly downtime.

Take Aerial Work Platform (AWP) equipment, for example. On a large construction project, you may have as many as five workers relying on a single piece of equipment, such as a 60-foot boom. If the boom is non-functioning — and can't be repaired or replaced for four hours — you quickly begin accruing costs. In fact, employee downtime alone could total more than \$1,600.

But that's only one consequence. The effects of an unusable boom or scissor lift extend far beyond just the bottom line. Indeed, failing to maintain your AWP equipment will affect a range of your company's operations, impacting productivity, worker safety, profitability, and most significantly, your company's reputation.

As a result, proper and thorough equipment maintenance should be a routine business function — an essential "best practices" protocol.

And whether you own or rent equipment, there are a number of options — ones that are neither time-consuming nor prohibitively expensive — requiring minimal resource allocation that ensures the proper maintenance of your equipment.



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ESSENTIAL AERIAL LIFT EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

1. SAFETY FIRST

Worker safety should be priority number one — an unwavering focus on eliminating workplace injuries.

While OSHA standards provide the minimum safety requirements, with more than 212,000 on-the-job injuries in the U.S. due to falls in 2009, clearly, more can be done.

If you rent AWP equipment, choose a rental company with a reputation built on safety — one that never settles for only meeting the minimum standards.

For instance, having decals on your equipment verifying you have documentation for the required annual inspection can be crucial to ensuring your employees' safety and providing OSHA with great documentation rapidly in the event of an inspection. It can set the tone for your job site inspection.

Make sure your rental company never settles for minimum standards. Your workers depend on it.

2. DAILY PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE ENSURES LONGEVITY

It takes just a few minutes each day to perform preventative maintenance checks on AWP equipment — a simple checklist of steps that preserves the life of the equipment.

Whether you rent or own your equipment, check all basic functions before each use, and check the oil daily. Both will go a long way toward preserving your equipment.

3. STAY CURRENT: GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, AND MANDATES ARE IN CONSTANT FLUX

OSHA, ANSI and individual manufacturers publish their own safety bulletins and guidelines, and it's crucial to stay abreast of the latest changes. Failure to do so can result in fines, as well as costly equipment breakdowns and workplace accidents.

Make sure your rental company requires its employees to undergo regular and ongoing training — including OEM training — and that its mechanics remain current on all applicable standards.

And if you own aerial lift equipment and need expert maintenance, servicing and operational guidance, choose a company that adheres to the same training standards.



4. PROACTIVE AND REGULAR INSPECTIONS UNCOVER SMALL PROBLEMS, REDUCE THE RISK OF BIGGER (AND MORE EXPENSIVE) ONES

Most equipment users consider maintenance only after equipment breaks down, often when it is too late to remedy the problem without significant cost.

Completing the required pre-start, frequent and annual inspections can help eliminate costly surprises, especially those that are the result of prolonged equipment neglect.

When screening for a rental partner, don't settle for vague inspection and servicing assurances. Ask questions that require firm timelines: How often do they inspect their rental equipment (even if performance is without issue)? Is equipment inspected after every rental (and more important, serviced whenever necessary)? Is there an annual servicing and inspection schedule?

A regular and ongoing schedule of inspection and maintenance preserves and extends the life of rental equipment while ensuring its optimal performance.

5. AWP EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE REQUIRES SPECIALIZED TRAINING

Perhaps the most significant AWP equipment maintenance and inspection consideration is that a mechanic with highly specialized training should perform it. This is not an area of crossover expertise. Rather, a properly trained AWP mechanic must understand every one of its systems and components, including its engine, its hydraulic system and its electrical wiring.

Even changing a battery on a lift is a complex procedure, as the battery can serve as a counterweight for the entire system. Thus, its removal must be executed while retaining the proper balance.

Your rental company should be equipped to work on highly complex AWP equipment, with mechanics that undergo equipment-specific training and take continuing education classes that address emerging technologies and equipment.

AWP equipment mechanics should undergo regular and intensive manufacturer training, either in-person, online or both. It's the only way to ensure that they are equipped to work on these highly complex machines.



6. AWP EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE IS GEO-SPECIFIC

Weather plays a significant role in the durability of all heavy-duty equipment, with rain, snow, wind and sun each imparting specific wear-and-tear to parts and systems.

In the western United States, for instance, the ground is exceptionally firm, which takes a toll on trenchers and other digging equipment. In the North, sub-zero temperatures can freeze equipment, interrupting operations, while in the South, scorching temperatures can lead to overheating.

As such, there is never a “one-size-fits-all” approach to proper AWP equipment maintenance. Rather, special attention to weather and climate must be paid to effectively inspect and maintain equipment.

Your rental equipment partner should understand geo-specific maintenance concerns, with mechanics that are trained to proactively inspect and repair its AWP equipment, especially in light of unique regional stresses.

7. EQUIPMENT USERS SHOULD — MUST! — UNDERGO PROPER TRAINING

It seems logical: Users of complex machinery should undergo proper and specialized operational training. But surprisingly, that’s frequently not the case.

To minimize breakdowns and worker injuries, AWP equipment operators need a comprehensive understanding of how the equipment works, as well as how to operate it correctly. This is accomplished through Operator Training as outlined in the ANSI A92 standards.

Does your rental equipment company offer you the required training for the proper use of AWP equipment and the specific information (familiarization) for the unit provided? Don’t leave this to chance — it’s the only way to be sure that your team can operate its equipment confidently and safely.

8. ACCURATE RECORD-KEEPING HELPS MINIMIZE RECURRING MAINTENANCE ISSUES

Compiling detailed maintenance logs is the only way to establish a historical record of equipment maintenance, helping to identify — and minimize — recurring problems.

Proper documentation establishes a record of compliance (essential for OSHA, ANSI, and manufacturer standards and guidelines), as well as traces a history of repairs, which assists in correcting persistent maintenance issues.

Detailed record keeping also helps reassure users that their equipment is performing properly and that it has received the attention necessary to ensure its uninterrupted performance. Furthermore, it allows users to verify quickly and easily the maintenance services performed.



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9. RESPONSE TIMES IMPACT THE SEVERITY OF EQUIPMENT BREAKDOWNS

No matter how proactive your approach to equipment maintenance, breakdowns are inevitable. And along with breakdowns come the incurrence of unbudgeted costs and project delays, both of which can severely impact other phases of your operations.

Response times must be swift to ensure project interruptions are kept to a minimum. And that's why partnering with an experienced equipment provider is essential.

The industry standard response time is four hours, but some companies — NES Rentals, for instance — stress a faster turnaround, promising to dispatch professional technicians to either repair or replace compromised rental equipment within two hours.

Verify the response times of your rental equipment company — partnering with one that commits to faster emergency service can substantially boost your bottom line.

Partner with a Maintenance Leader

Whether you own AWP equipment and need a reliable repair service, or you are looking to partner with a rental firm that delivers reliable, trouble-free equipment, choose a company that adheres to the highest maintenance and safety standards.

Ask probing questions of your rental company. Verify the expertise of its mechanics, its training and safety records, and its inspection schedule.

The maintenance of your AWP equipment will affect every phase of your operations. Make sure you partner with a maintenance or servicing firm that understands what's at stake.

To learn more or find a location near you, visit [NESrentals.com](https://www.nesrentals.com) or call 800-NES-RENT.