



# Aerial Lift Familiarization and Training Clarified

BY KATIE PARRISH

VERBIAGE IN THE standards and regulations is often confusing for owners and operators of equipment. It's even more perplexing when the terms used to define two different tasks are difficult to distinguish.

The 1999 update to the ANSI A92.6 standard for self-propelled elevating work platforms, including boom lifts, clearly differentiated training from the newly introduced definition of familiarization. Training recognized safety hazards and consisted of the instructions necessary for the trainee to become a qualified person (trained operator), while familiarization regarded the control functions and safety devices on a specific aerial platform to be operated by a qualified person. In 2006, the standards were updated again to consistently incorporate this language and were revised to add that the information regarding control functions and safety devices is to be given to the operator who will control machine movement.

However, the distinction between training and familiarization is still not completely understood by the industry. To eliminate the confusion, Aerial Work Platform Training Inc., Schenectady, NY., issued a technical guidance on familiarization and training last month, detailing how both are necessary for complete aerial work platform safety.

According to AWPT, the major difference between training and familiarization is the scope and extent of material covered. Operator training addresses the safe use, general operating practices, and recognition of hazards when covering a category of aerial platforms like self-propelled elevating work platforms or boom-supported elevating work platforms. The AWPT

technical guidance says it only addresses the control functions and safety devices of the specific machine being utilized in the training class. Not every machine on the market can be covered in a training class, so before aerial lift operation, there needs to be unit-specific familiarization.

Aerial work platform familiarization is given to individuals who are qualified. "In other words, you must be trained before you can be familiarized," the guidance reads. The dealer/rental company has the responsibility to provide familiarization to the person designated by the receiving party, or the person directing his employees to operate the machine. The recipient must ensure that operators are properly trained, familiarized, and made aware of the requirements of an operator as defined by ANSI prior to authorizing aerial lift operation. To read the entire technical guidance on familiarization and training, go to [www.awpt.org](http://www.awpt.org). The document can be downloaded for free.

Understanding the difference between aerial work platform training and familiarization only skims the surface when it comes to aerial lift safety. This fall, *Industrial Lift and Hoist* will host the one-day Safe Access, Fall Protection & Training (SAF-T) Conference in Baltimore, Md., which is designed to promote the safe use of powered access equipment to owners and end users through presentations from industry safety experts and open discussion among colleagues.

AWP manufacturers, fall protection device producers, national and regional rental companies, and key trade associations are expected to take part in the event. Visit [www.saf-tconference.com](http://www.saf-tconference.com) for more information. We hope to see you there. ~

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EDITORIAL & DESIGN

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER Guy Ramsey  
480-595-2772

[g. Ramsey@maxeapmedia.com](mailto:g. Ramsey@maxeapmedia.com)

VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS Barbara Benton  
800-231-8953, ext. 114

[barbara@cranehotline.com](mailto:barbara@cranehotline.com)

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Tracy Bennett

816-536-7903

[tracybennett@eranehotline.com](mailto:tracybennett@eranehotline.com)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Katie Parrish

480-241-5625

[kparrish@maxeapmedia.com](mailto:kparrish@maxeapmedia.com)

SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR Sue Dahlberg

847-348-0284

[sdahlberg@maxeapmedia.com](mailto:sdahlberg@maxeapmedia.com)

STAFF WRITER Luey Perry

816-214-5032

[lperry@eranehotline.com](mailto:lperry@eranehotline.com)

ART DIRECTOR Kevin Ott

kevinott@sbeglobal.net

ADVERTISING SALES

800-231-8953

515-574-2312 (direct) FAX 515-574-2361

Advertising Rates, Deadlines, and Mechanical Requirements furnished upon request.

ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE Cindy Boge

515-574-2312, ext. 284

[cindyb@eranehotline.com](mailto:cindyb@eranehotline.com)

ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE Floyd Geopfert

515-574-2312, ext. 278

[floyd@eranehotline.com](mailto:floyd@eranehotline.com)

ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE Kip Krady

480-329-5773

[kkrady@liftdandaccess.com](mailto:kkrady@liftdandaccess.com)

ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE Janie Trainer

515-574-2312, ext. 168

[jtrainer@maxcapmedia.com](mailto:jtrainer@maxcapmedia.com)

ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE Jason Behrendt

480-231-9672

[jbehrendt@maxeapmedia.com](mailto:jbehrendt@maxeapmedia.com)

MARKETING ASSISTANT Beeky Grazier

515-574-2312

[bgrazier@maxeapmedia.com](mailto:bgrazier@maxeapmedia.com)

Maximum Capacity Media LLC

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*Crane Hot Line*, *Lift and Access*,  
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1003 Central Avenue, P.O. Box 1052

Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501

515-574-2312 Fax: 515-574-2361

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