Aerial and Scissor Lifts – Landscaping Fatality File



Fatal Aerial Lift Accident During Tree Trimming

On August 12, 2023, a fatal accident involving an aerial lift occurred during a tree trimming operation in a residential neighborhood in Orlando, Florida. The incident resulted in the death of a 39-year-old landscaping worker, Jonathan Reed. Reed was operating a scissor lift to reach and trim high branches when the lift suddenly tipped over due to unstable ground conditions.

Despite being harnessed, Reed was ejected from the lift when it fell and suffered fatal injuries upon impact with the ground. The investigation revealed that the lift was not properly stabilized, and no thorough inspection of the ground conditions was conducted prior to use. Additionally, the lift was being operated near power lines, increasing the risk of electrocution, which fortunately did not occur in this instance.

In response to this tragic incident, the landscaping company has implemented stricter safety protocols, including mandatory ground stability checks, proper use of outrigger stabilizers, and comprehensive training for all operators of aerial and scissor lifts. The company also introduced regular maintenance and inspection schedules for all lifting equipment to prevent future accidents.