4.1.25
Safe Operation of Vehicle Tail-Lifts

This SOP has been designed based on current tail-lifts in operation on the Booths fleet. It is to inform and guide you through the general safe operation of a tail-lift, however the actual controls and style of lift may differ from vehicle to vehicle. Please ensure that if you are unfamiliar with the controls due to them differing from those shown in this SOP, you seek guidance from your Supervisor or Manager. The process however should remain the same.

There are two types of tail-lift used in the Booths fleet of which both are covered in this SOP. These consist of a sliding/drop down device, which lays flush with the rear door of the vehicle as well as a cantilever lift, which sits underneath the rear of the vehicle. As a driver however, you must be mindful that hire vehicles may be used that have tail-lifts that differ slightly to the one’s highlighted in this SOP and you must be fully familiar with the operation before making deliveries.

The tail-lift may be the only means of loading/unloading your vehicle so it is imperative that you understand and consider the risks when utilising the lift. You must ensure that the area of operation is clear of pedestrians or obstructions and only operate the platform in safe conditions.

At the Distribution Centre - as part of your pre-use check of the vehicle, you should ensure that the tail-lift is fully operational and functioning correctly. Report and rectify any faults prior to leaving site.

Retail staff, should not be allowed to operate the lifts unless they have been trained to do so and also signed this SOP.

All personnel involved in the operation of tail-lifts must also have received Manual Handling training (at induction) and be aware of control measures as identified in Risk Assessment 5.1.10 (Manual Handling Musculoskeletal Disorders).

For these reasons the following safe system of work must be employed

As there are two types of tail-lift within the fleet, two different methods of operation will be required. The first method will relate to sliding/drop down tail-lifts and the second will relate to cantilever tail-lifts.

Whilst in operation, check for electrical and mechanical defects and ensure the tail-lift operates in a smooth and consistent motion by using the controls. If there are any crunching/grinding/squealing noises, have the lift inspected accordingly.

Tail-lifts must be inspected before use as part of the vehicle pre-use check. As with all moving parts, ensure that nothing can get trapped or snagged whilst the platform is moving.

You MUST NOT drive the vehicle whilst the tail-lift platform has been lowered! Always ensure the load, tail-lift platform and rear doors are secure prior to travelling. Always wear the appropriate PPE (i.e. Safety boots, gloves, high vis clothing).
To operate any tail-lift you must check for and ensure the isolator switch situated in the cab is lit:

This allows power to the operator panels at the rear of the vehicle.

Take caution when using the control panel not to keep the buttons depressed when the platform has no further travel as this could cause the motors to burn out.

**Method 1 - Drop Down Tail-Lift**

To lower the lift, press the ‘down’ button and allow the platform to lower to a reasonable height in order to manually flip the platform down to a horizontal position. If at any point you hear squealing/grinding noises or see that the platform is not moving correctly, seek assistance.

Note: the platform must be lowered sufficiently below the safety lug to allow it to be flipped horizontally.

This tail-lift has a counterbalance operation, so when flipping to the horizontal position, support the top of the platform with your right hand and release the catch (pictured) with your left hand in order for it to flip back.

Use both hands to lower the platform into the horizontal position.

**Caution:** Be wary that the platform is heavy and take caution when lowering into the horizontal position. Use the correct techniques as shown in your manual handling training.

When the platform is lowered down horizontally, the safety pin should drop into place and lock the platform down in position. This is one of the key parts ensuring the platform can be used safely and won’t allow the platform to spring back whilst in operation.

Ensure all side plates are placed upright and locked in position prior to the platform being used. No load should be transported on the platform without the use of these side plates.
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Method 1 - Drop Down Tail-Lift (Cont.)

When travelling on the platform utilise the control panel on the inside the rear of the vehicle. As the operator, you must ensure that the load is safe and secure on the platform prior to travel. You must also ensure that there are no obstructions or pedestrians likely to come to harm whilst the platform is in travel.

⚠️ Never overload the platform and follow the relevant instructions as described in 4.1.24 Delivery Procedure at Store.

Upon completion of loading/unloading, replace all side plates into the flat position then flip the platform back into vertical position by pressing on the rear corner of the platform and lifting the locking pin. This should allow the platform to spring up.

⚠️ Caution: - As the platform is heavy, be wary when pushing back up into the vertical position.

Use the external control button to lift the platform so the lug sits behind the safety plate as shown. This plate ensures that the platform cannot accidently flip back down whilst the vehicle is travelling.

Method 2 - Cantilever Tail-Lift

The cantilever tail-lift has a safety key, which will need to be inserted into the control box prior to any operation.
As with the prior lift operation, ensure checks have been made to make the area safe and there are no obstructions or pedestrians likely to come to harm. Utilise the switch and joystick to operate the platform keeping visual checks of the surrounding area.

⚠️ Caution: - When flipping the platform down, use both hands controlling the weight of the platform. The platform is heavy but you must not put yourself at risk. If in doubt, seek assistance.

Utilise the canvas strap attached to the platform and unfold the platform ready for use. Be careful not to stand in the way as the platform flips over.

As with the slide down tail-lift, you must ensure all the safety devices are in place prior to use. On the cantilever platform, these consist of safety rails, which are removable and slot into each end of the platform. You will find these hung on the inside rear doors.

Also, there are kick plates, which spring up and down when required.

⚠️ Both of these devices are in place to secure loads whilst in travel and must be used at all times to maintain yours and others safety!

Use the internal control panel to raise and lower the platform accordingly.

⚠️ To return the platform back to it’s folded state, flip the platform to a vertical state. As shown, ensure you keep a straight back and lift in a steady movement. The platform will rest against rollers, which are connected to the mechanism to return it back under the vehicle.

Utilise control box on side of vehicle to bring platform back under the vehicle. Remove the control key to isolate the panel.
You must be aware that due to the workload and frequency of operation, tail-lifts may fail from time to time.

In the event of a failure (e.g. faulty electrics/control panel fault/mechanical fault), cease from using the lift immediately and **DO NOT** try and repair the fault yourself. Ensure that you contact your line Manager and inform them of the issue so that they can escalate it to a qualified engineer.

Never put yourself at risk by trying to fix a fault!

When at store: - The Driver must check the safety lip / flap is in position.

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**Document Review history of changes**

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