STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Vehicle Lift Safety SOP

Document no.	SOP-AUT-005
Revision	1.0
Owner	Shop Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 6 months

1. Purpose

To make sure only trained technicians operate the vehicle lift, every vehicle is raised within the lift's rated capacity at its correct lift points, and safety locks are engaged before anyone works underneath.

2. Scope

Applies to two-post, four-post and mid-rise lifts used for vehicle service. Jack stands used without a lift are covered by a separate procedure.

Definitions

Rated capacity	The maximum weight a lift is designed to safely raise, set by the lift manufacturer.
Lift points	The specific locations on a vehicle's frame or body designated by the vehicle manufacturer as safe contact points for lifting.
Safety lock	A mechanical lock on the lift that holds it in place at height, used any time someone works underneath a raised vehicle.

3. Responsibilities

Technician	Inspects the lift before use, positions the vehicle correctly, and engages safety locks before working underneath.
Shop Manager	Ensures only trained technicians operate lifts, schedules lift maintenance, and takes a malfunctioning lift out of service.

RACI matrix

Activity	Technician	Shop Manager
Inspect the lift before use	R/A	I
Confirm vehicle weight and lift points	R/A	I
Engage safety locks before working underneath	R/A	I
Report a lift malfunction and take it out of service	R	A
Schedule and track lift maintenance	C	R/A

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Vehicle manufacturer's lift point guide
- Lift manufacturer's rated capacity chart
- Lift pre-use inspection checklist
- Out-of-service tags
- Lift maintenance log

Personal protective equipment

- Safety glasses
- Steel-toe boots

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Complete lift training before operating** Confirm you have completed the shop's lift operation training and are authorized before operating any lift. **Warning:** Never operate a lift you have not been trained and authorized to use.	Technician	☐
5.2	**Inspect the lift before use** Visually inspect the lift for fluid leaks, damaged arms or pads, and confirm the safety lock mechanism moves freely before loading a vehicle. **Checkpoint:** Lift passes a visual pre-use inspection with no visible damage or leaks before any vehicle is raised.	Technician	☐
5.3	**Confirm the vehicle is within rated capacity** Check the vehicle's weight against the lift's rated capacity chart before positioning it on the lift. **Warning:** Never raise a vehicle that exceeds the lift's rated capacity, even briefly.	Technician	☐
5.4	**Position the vehicle on the lift** Drive the vehicle onto the lift and center it according to the lift's markings and the vehicle's weight distribution.	Technician	☐
5.5	**Identify the correct lift points** Locate the vehicle manufacturer's designated lift points using the lift point guide, not an assumed or approximate location. **Warning:** Placing arms on the wrong lift point can damage the vehicle or cause it to slip off the lift.	Technician	☐
5.6	**Raise the vehicle a few inches and check stability** Raise the vehicle a few inches off the ground and check that it is stable and contact points are secure before raising further. **Checkpoint:** Vehicle stability is confirmed at a few inches of height before raising to full working height.	Technician	☐
5.7	**Raise to working height and engage safety locks** Raise the vehicle to the height needed for the job and engage the lift's mechanical safety locks before anyone goes underneath. **Warning:** Never work under a vehicle supported only by hydraulic pressure; always engage the mechanical safety locks first.	Technician	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.8	**Clear the area of hazards** Clear tools, hoses and unauthorized personnel from under and around the vehicle before starting work.	Technician	☐
5.9	**Perform the service work** Complete the planned service or repair work with the vehicle securely supported on the engaged safety locks.	Technician	☐
5.10	**Clear the area before lowering** Remove all tools, stands and materials from under the vehicle and confirm the area is clear of people before lowering. **Checkpoint:** Area under and around the vehicle is confirmed clear before the safety locks are released.	Technician	☐
5.11	**Release safety locks and lower the vehicle** Release the mechanical safety locks and lower the vehicle slowly and steadily to the ground.	Technician	☐
5.12	**Confirm arms are retracted** Once fully lowered, confirm the lift arms are retracted clear of the vehicle before driving it off the lift.	Technician	☐
5.13	**Report a lift malfunction** If the lift makes an unusual noise, fails to hold at height, or shows a fluid leak, stop use immediately, tag it out of service, and notify the shop manager. **Warning:** Never continue using a lift showing any sign of malfunction.	Technician	☐
5.14	**Schedule and log lift maintenance** Schedule the lift's periodic maintenance and inspection with a qualified service provider and log completion in the lift maintenance log.	Shop Manager	☐

6. Quality checks

- Every lift passes a documented pre-use inspection before the first vehicle of the day.
- No vehicle is raised beyond the lift's rated capacity.
- Mechanical safety locks are engaged before any technician works underneath a raised vehicle.
- A malfunctioning lift is tagged out of service the same day it is reported.

7. Records

- Lift pre-use inspection checklist
- Lift maintenance and inspection log
- Out-of-service tag and repair record
- Technician lift training sign-off

8. KPIs

- Percentage of shifts with a completed lift pre-use inspection
- Number of lift malfunctions reported per quarter
- Time from malfunction report to lift returned to service
- Percentage of technicians current on lift training

9. Common mistakes

- Skipping the pre-use inspection because the lift was used without issue the day before.
- Estimating a lift point instead of checking the vehicle manufacturer's lift point guide.
- Working under a vehicle supported only by hydraulic pressure without engaging the safety locks.
- Continuing to use a lift after noticing an unusual noise or slow drift.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Ilia Pirozhenko

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

This is a template. Adapt it to your organization, equipment and local regulations before use.

Scan for the latest version

Opens this template online, where you can download it again in Word, PDF, Excel or CSV — free, no sign-up.

Or add it to Perfect Wiki so your team can find it and ask questions about it in Microsoft Teams, Slack, kChat or Mattermost.