

By R.W. O'Gorman

Safety Starts With You!

Lift safety can help save lives.

Perhaps the most profound safety statement regarding today's automotive service industry can be attributed to NASCAR's Kyle Petty. In the lift safety training video titled "Lifting It Right," he passionately says, "Although it may not seem as exciting as NASCAR racing, or perhaps fire fighting, or law enforcement, your chosen career does have two important elements associated with the three just mentioned. First, to ensure your safety and the safety of others, you must be aware of your surroundings and stay alert. Second – and most important of all – at the end of your work day, someone wants you to come home safely."

In today's global economy, it's fair to coin the phrase from that memorable Chevy commercial, "This ain't your Grandpa's Chevrolet." Actually, when considering the vast majority of service centers across North America, the statement could be modified to reflect the fact that "This ain't your Grandpa's shop, either." Not only have automobiles gone high tech, but for the most part, gone is the day when wrenching was simply that! Today's technicians, shop owners, and vocational technology instructors must not only keep up with automobile technology, they must also tune into customer value-added services, environmental issues, purchasing considerations and risk management.

Not many will disagree that "safety is everyone's responsibility." Looking deeper into this, however, let me challenge you. When was the last time that you took the proactive step of influencing those you work with each day in the area of workplace safety? It's amazing when you consider that auto technicians take such a tremendous amount of pride and care when it comes to their tools and those massive storage chests used to house and protect them. Is it fair to say that those who are serious about their chosen profession often forego other desires to acquire simply the best brand-named tools available?

Yet, often those same technicians are willing to work each day under an automotive service lift that has not been maintained in a manner that demonstrates a responsible level of planned maintenance.

Sadly, often the necessary training received in operating a lift is overlooked, as are basic automotive lift risk management practices such as the use of appropriate personal protective equipment, jack stands, vehicle-lifting points and even safety locks. In an



instant, the omission of these practices can have a horrific effect on an individual's business and the lives of those working in and around such an environment.

Your shop's service lift is a great place to begin to tackle workplace safety. Remember: A good man once said, "Most important of all ... at the end of your work day, someone wants you to come home safely."

Editor's Note: For more information on lift safety, visit www.autolift.org.

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