

More growth for AFI in 2006

As a progressive and evolving company, AFI is committed to continuing to invest in our fleet, our depot network and our people during 2006.

As part of a £10 million expansion plan, we will be adding 600 new boom and scissor lifts to the rental fleet this year, bringing the total to over 2,700 units. At the same time we will be expanding our depot network from 12 to 15 locations, with the first of the additional depots already open for business – see Page 2.



AFI will be increasing its hire fleet to over 2,700 units in 2006.

I'm also delighted to say that AFI goes into 2006 having gained Investors In People accreditation – see Page 3.

To further enhance our customer service levels we are also restructuring our operations, resulting in three regions:

The **North Region** will cover Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Peterlee and Wakefield. The team will comprise Steve Gerrard, Operations Manager; Doug Piper, Service Manager; Clare Rochford, Regional Operations

Co-ordinator (North); Operations Controllers Dave Mumford (Liverpool), Dave Wilde (Wakefield), Yvonne Hook (Peterlee) and Senior HDCs Nina Crowley (Manchester) and Julia Yates (Hull).

The **Midlands** will take in Birmingham, East Midlands, Peterborough and South Wales, with a team made up of Carlo Vinci, Operations Manager; Mike Edwards, Service Manager; Yvonne Bowen, Regional Operations Co-ordinator (Midlands); and Operations Controller Matthew Cotton (East Midlands).

In the **South** the depots will be London East, London South, London West, and Southampton. The team will be John Robertson, Operations Manager; Darren Cleaver, Service Manager; Dave Freebody, Regional Operations Co-ordinator (South); and Operations Controller Keith Jarman (London East).

Another key move in this restructure is the appointment of Tony Kelly as National Service Manager.

These plans follow investment in 2005 which resulted in AFI adding 500 machines to our rental fleet, expanding our transport fleet to offer a more flexible and efficient service and expanding our customer base to over 3,000.

**By Nick Selley
Director**

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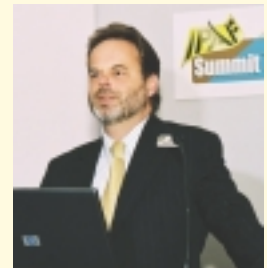
INVESTORS IN PEOPLE



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FOCUS ON SAFETY

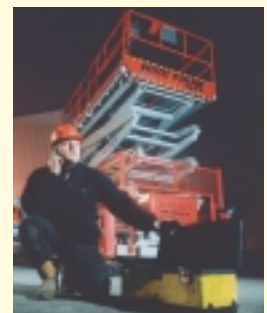
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WORKING ALONE

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AFI's machine sales operation powers ahead

AFI is reporting strong sales of machines through its recently-launched AFI Resale division.

Headed by Sales Director Graham Osmond, the division sells both new and used machines and also offers a package of after sales options, including breakdown cover and six-monthly inspections.

"The response from customers in the powered access industry to AFI Resale has been extremely positive and sales are well ahead of initial targets. We are looking to the future with extreme confidence, based on this healthy level of performance," said Graham.

"Whilst AFI is primarily a rental provider we often come into contact with a significant number of customers who wish to purchase a machine for their own long-term use," he added.

"Through AFI Resale we are able to satisfy this demand – both for used machines and for new ones."

Used machine sales make up the biggest percentage of the division's activities – AFI's rental fleet is being expanded and upgraded on an on-going basis and as part of that programme machines are made available to customers through AFI Resale.

All are in hire-ready condition and have received the appropriate LOLER certification. They are ideal for any company which needs to use powered access equipment on a permanent basis, such as for regular on-going routine maintenance work at height.

Details of machines available for sale, including photographs, prices and descriptions are listed in the Resale section of AFI's website:

www.afi-platforms.co.uk



Graham Osmond.

As well as resale machines from the AFI fleet, the new division can also supply new machines and source used equipment from other agents to meet the specific requirements of customers.

The company also offers a range of finance packages, together with optional warranty schemes and servicing arrangements.

WHERE TO CONTACT AFI DEPOTS:

**BIRMINGHAM, EAST MIDLANDS,
HULL, LIVERPOOL, LONDON
EAST, LONDON SOUTH,
LONDON WEST, MANCHESTER,
NORTH EAST, PETERBOROUGH,
SOUTH WALES, SOUTHAMPTON,
WAKEFIELD**

**To contact any of our depots,
telephone 08707 511005**



AFI opens new London depot

AFI has further expanded its UK depot network by opening a depot in Sevenoaks, Kent.

The new depot – on the Platt Industrial Estate, Maidstone Road, St Mary's Platt, Sevenoaks – will begin with a fleet of 100 boom and scissor lifts, with AFI planning to double this number during the next 12 months. The depot will offer full hire, sales, service and training facilities.

The initial team at the new depot include Con Hope, Account Manager; Brian Phillips, Hire Desk Controller; and Roy Flood, Service Engineer. All have extensive experience in the industry, having worked for another major powered access company.

AFI Director Richard Saunders said: "We already have two depots in the London area which are seeing an increased demand for powered access equipment, and our new depot in Sevenoaks will provide us with an additional base in the region, allowing us to further enhance our service levels."

"AFI is moving forward in all respects – we are opening more depots, expanding our fleet and at the same time have increased our customer base," he added.

AFI gains Investors In People

AFI has achieved Investors In People – after taking the much more difficult route of gaining the standard on a ‘depot by depot’ basis, rather than by the company making a single application covering its total depot network.

Although AFI’s 12 existing depots and Support Centre have now gained accreditation, the application process will now begin for the company’s new London South depot, and later for two further depots which AFI is planning to open during this year.

AFI Training Manager Paul Maxwell said: “Everyone in the organisation has had a part in this fantastic achievement of gaining Investors In People status



AFI staff celebrate their Investors In People success.

but it doesn’t stop there – our reports showed that we do a great many things very well and a few things exceptionally well but it also highlighted a few areas where we can improve the way we work as a team and we are taking steps to address this. The Board of Directors are all committed to providing the support to

all our staff to enable them to develop both as individuals and as team members.”

“If we stick to the fundamentals of always working together as a team we will ensure that 2006 will be another exciting and successful year for AFI,” he added.

The AFI training team will

be organising more than 700 training days throughout the year and the company also have an additional, innovative scheme called Training Plus.

This enables any employee to apply for funding for any form of training and personal development.

Recent examples have included HGV 1 training and driving test, CIPD Certificate in Employment law, AS Level Psychology and the NEBOSH General Certificate.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

New Pipe Stand will provide increased safety

In a move to further increase safety in the access industry, AFI can now provide a large number of scissor lifts which feature a specially-adapted stand for holding pipes.

AFI Technical Director Roger Thorington said: “We are introducing the AFI Pipe Stand because there is now increasing pressure on construction site operatives to find safer methods of carrying materials.

“The stand is designed to offer a safe alternative to some of the bad practices which sometimes occur – such as contractors balancing a number of heavy and unstable pipes on the hand rails of a scissor lift, a purpose for which they are not

designed, or even using a boom lift which is even more unsuitable for that type of task.”

“Productivity can be increased due to improved man handling of pipes and fixings. The AFI Pipe Stand is designed to offer variable adjustment for operations and only weighs 74kg,” he added.

The AFI Pipe Stand is simple and easy to load from a forklift or telehandler and it will safely hold a number of 2, 3, 4 or 6 inch diameter pipes. The pipes are then strapped into special grooves to stop any movement and to maintain the stability of the scissor lift.

“We have launched the AFI Pipe Stand after successfully carrying out extensive field trials. It is available on a significant number of our

large double deck diesel scissors and on a range of our electric scissors, and we are looking to extend its application to a greater proportion of our scissor range,” said Mr Thorington. “Scissors fitted with the AFI

Pipe Stand are available for only a small addition to the rental rate and we are expecting significant demand from the building industry in general and the H&V sector in particular.”



ALWAYS WEAR A HAR



By IPAF Managing Director
Tim Whiteman

Harnesses save lives and should be worn in boom lifts. There are too many users of mobile elevating work platforms who are simply not in the habit of wearing safety harnesses.

If they understood the risks that they were taking, they would certainly use them. The simple fact is that harnesses save lives.

That is why the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) published in May 2005 its Technical Guidance Note H1/05/05, recommending the use of full-body harnesses to be worn with the lanyard adjusted as short as practically possible for users of telescopic boom type platforms. The principal risk for users of telescopic

boom lifts is being 'bounced' out of the basket, particularly when travelling. Unexpectedly uneven or soft ground, or going over a cable, can cause the boom to vibrate and possibly throw the operator out.

The other major cause of operators falling from baskets is when a boom type MEWP is struck, or just clipped, by another, passing vehicle. This is a particular hazard on busy construction sites, or working alongside live highways.

It should be emphasised that aerial work platforms are fundamentally safe, but accidents do happen. IPAF emphasises that lanyards should be work short – in fall restraint mode (also called work restraint) – to stop the operator coming out of the basket. A lanyard set longer offers fall arrest, but not fall restraint. The lanyard serves the purpose of catching the operator before they hit the ground, rather than keeping them in the basket.

The first problem with fall arrest equipment is that the basket has to be high enough to allow the lanyard time to work, especially those types which flex to cushion the impact of the harness, taking the falling load.

The second problem is that an operator hanging from the basket has to be rescued quite quickly. Within 20 minutes blood flow can start to be affected by the harness.

The third, and potentially greatest, danger with fall arrest is that the

shock loading on the platform can be enough to tip it over, injuring (or worse) both the fallen operator and whoever may be beneath. Therefore, it is best to prevent the operator falling out of the basket in the first place. Keep the lanyards short.

IPAF recommends the full-body type of harness to protect the wearer. With a belt harness, a strong jolt can cause damage to the back and/or internal organs.



IPAF does not recommend, in normal situations, the use of harnesses and lanyards in scissor lifts or vertical platforms, primarily because they are not subject to the same risk of bouncing the operator out.

Lanyards can actually present a safety hazard on the deck of a scissor lift. If the lanyard is long enough to allow the operator to work around the platform (since scissor lift decks are generally larger than those on boom lifts), then by its very nature it presents a trip hazard.

It also restricts the visibility of the operator of larger scissor lifts when driving at height unless they detach the harness each time they wish to reverse.

Additionally, it is sometimes difficult or impossible to slide the deck out without disconnecting the lanyard. As

HSE enforcement statistics

Companies which fail to follow safety guidelines to protect their employees risk severe penalties from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). Enforcement statistics released by the HSE for 2004/05 show that they prosecuted 712 cases throughout Great Britain, with 95% of all prosecutions resulting in convictions.

The average penalty for HSE cases was £18,765 and the largest penalty imposed was £2 million, on a railway company. The level of average penalties is on the increase – the figure of £18,765 for 2004/05 compares with £14,303 in 2003/04 and £9,395 in 2002/03.

Total penalties for the 673 convictions in 2004/05 were £12,628,940, compared with £12,686,787 in the previous year when there were 887 convictions, and £7,957,872 in 2002/03 when the convictions numbered 847.

NESS IN A BOOM LIFT

the guidance note makes clear, a risk analysis should always be performed and its finding adhered to.

The importance of risk analysis cannot be over-emphasised, since there are always exceptions to general rules. Users of rough terrain, diesel-powered scissors should ensure they are harnessed and securely tied when travelling over bumpy ground or where – in the total absence of a safer alternative – they are compelled to lean out of the machine (something to be generally avoided at all costs).

Conversely, risk analysis may lead the operator of a boom lift not to wear a harness if he or she is working over water. Depending on work height, machine configuration and other factors, falling freely into water may be a lesser risk than the machine falling into the water with the operator tied to it.

IPAF's recommendations have been developed after extensive consultation with industry safety experts and with the UK Health & Safety Executive



(HSE). The HSE also supports IPAF's recommendation that harnesses do not need to be worn in most climbing work platforms.

Although the guidance was drafted specifically to comply with UK regulations, we regard it as best practice wherever you are working in the world.

However, IPAF offices in the USA, Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland are

consulting with national safety authorities to confirm that there is nothing in the various national regulations that presents any conflict with what we are saying.

I am happy to report that the guidance note has been warmly welcomed by non-specialists who have been crying out for simple, clear guidance on this issue.

Wearing a harness makes such good sense in boom lifts that I look forward to the day very soon when they are regarded as the symbol of the professional worker-at-height. Operators should regard them as a badge of office and a status symbol of their professionalism.

■ IPAF Technical Guidance Note H1/05.05 on the use of safety harnesses is available at www.ipaf.org/h10505.pdf. Printed copies, in leaflet format, can also be obtained from IPAF (info@ipaf.org).

AFI in drive to cut suspension trauma risks

As part of its commitment to safety, AFI is making a new device available to its customers to cut the risk of trauma injuries if they fall from a machine and are then suspended by their safety harness.

When someone remains suspended at height for a period of time, blood begins to pool in the veins of their legs, and – unless they are rescued rapidly – they face serious injury or even death.

The new Suspension Trauma Safety Strap allows the worker who is suspended to stand up in their harness to relieve the pressure being applied to the arteries and veins around the top of the legs.

The continuous loop design means that by placing either one foot or both feet in the loop, pressure will be relieved while the person awaits rescue.

AFI Training Manager Paul Maxwell said: "This is a very important new concept which provides a secondary means of safety for people working at height. All our customers will be able to obtain the Suspension Trauma Safety Strap from AFI and we will also be promoting its use through our harness courses and also through our IPAF scissor and boom courses."

The Trauma Strap weighs only 91g and can be attached as two small zipped packs to most makes of harness for easy deployment in the event of a fall. For more information contact AFI on 08707 871511.



AFI REACHES EVEN HIGHER

New boom is the largest in the AFI fleet

To accommodate customer requirements for machines that will work at even greater heights, AFI has added three 39.9m Genie booms to its fleet.

The Genie S-125 booms are the largest ever purchased by AFI – beating their predecessors by a total of 37 feet. With a working height of 131 feet (39.9m), the S-125 has an outreach of 80 feet (24.4m) and a lift capacity of 500lbs (227kg). Standard features



The lightweight Nifty HR10 boom.

include four-wheel drive with four-wheel steer. The innovative four-wheel steer feature, which includes front, rear, crab and co-ordinated steer functions, provides manoeuvrability unsurpassed by any machine in the 80 foot and above range.

As the operator sees a need to switch steering modes while manoeuvring, he simply pushes a selection button and the control system automatically adjusts the wheel position to match the selected mode as the operator continues to drive. Combine this exclusive feature with a maximum steer angle of 38 degrees and the result is turning radius and manoeuvrability that sets a new standard in the industry.

The S-125 also features extendable axles which can be hydraulically operated from the platform – there are no position locking pins in the axles or the steer mechanism to remove and replace when extending or retracting the axles. The S-125 has a 5ft jib with a 135-degree range of motion, 75 degrees above horizontal and 60 degrees below horizontal.

■ AFI has also further developed its fleet by extending its range of lightweight booms. The company has



An AFI 39.9m Genie S-125 boom.

bought a number of Nifty HR10 platforms which have a working height of 10m (33ft) and have a compact and very low weight base. Weighing less than two tonnes, the HR10 has an outreach of 4.5m (14ft 9in) and a platform capacity of 200kg (440lbs).

The HR10 narrow option gives 1.4m (4ft 7in) access and its tight turning circle means superb manoeuvrability in restricted areas.

AFI machines on site at major glass plant

Nearly 40 boom and scissor lifts were on hire from AFI to four different sub-contractors working on the construction of a major new glass manufacturing and bottling plant in the North West.

And to ensure that everything kept running smoothly, an AFI engineer visited the Quinn Glass site at Ince in Cheshire twice a week to check over the machines.

One of the sub-contractors hiring a large number of AFI machines was electrical contractor HTE Ltd of Southern Ireland, which had 15 electric scissor lifts with platform heights up to 6.2m, and two bi-energy booms with heights of 18.2m and 10.2m. A HTE spokesperson said: "It was very helpful having the AFI engineer coming onto the site regularly because he has been able to resolve any problems quickly, so avoiding any delays to our work."

HTE used the boom and scissor lifts throughout the site to install power supplies, route cables and set up all the site's electrical services.



Two of the AFI machines at the Quinn Glass plant.

Looking after lone workers

Is it legal to work alone and is it safe? This article, based on information from the Health and Safety Executive, will help anyone who employs or engages lone workers.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers have responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and the health and safety of those affected by the work, eg visitors such as contractors and self-employed people whom employers may engage.

It is the employer's duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risk where necessary. Employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

Safe working arrangements

Some of the issues which need special attention when planning safe working arrangements for lone workers are:

Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?

Extra risk-control measures may be required to take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, eg fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents. Employers should identify situations where people work alone and ask questions such as:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?

- Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person? Can any temporary access equipment which is necessary, such as portable ladders or trestles, be safely handled by one person?
- Can all the plant, substances and goods involved in the work be safely handled by one person?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are women/young workers especially at risk if they work alone?

Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?

Check that lone workers have no medical conditions which make them unsuitable for working alone. Seek medical advice if necessary.

What training is required to ensure competency in safety matters?

Training is particularly important where there is limited supervision to control, guide and help in situations of uncertainty. Training may be critical to avoid panic reactions in unusual situations. Employers should set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone. They should ensure employees are competent to deal with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training, such as how to handle aggression.

How will the person be supervised?

Supervision can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. Supervision of health and safety can often be carried out during a site visit when checking the progress and quality of the work.

The level of supervision required is a management decision which should be based on the findings of risk assessment. It should not be left to individuals to decide whether they require assistance.

Procedures will need to be put in place to monitor lone workers to ensure they remain safe. These may include periodic visits by a supervisor, regular contact between the lone worker and supervisor using either a telephone or radio, and automatic warning devices which operate if specific signals are not received periodically from the lone worker, eg systems for security staff.

What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or there is an emergency?

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. They should have access to adequate first-aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first-aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries. Occasionally risk assessment may indicate that lone workers need training in first aid.

AFI introduces lone worker measures

AFI is believed to be the first powered access rental company to provide an emergency SOS service for its employees when they are working alone. Over 100 staff members, including engineers, drivers and hire desk controllers working on their own will be registered with a new, unique personal security service that works on any mobile phone. The service is provided by MobileSOS Limited.

Employees can press a panic button on their mobile to summon help from colleagues or business associates. A pre-recorded message and location is sent out via voice, text and email, ensuring the employee is given assistance.

A further element of the service allows employees to press an "I am OK" preset button to let AFI know that they are safe, or that they have arrived safely at their destination. Employees can also activate a timer that will trigger an emergency alert if it is not cancelled before the timer runs out.

AFI Director Austin Baker said: "AFI are introducing this service because as a responsible employer we want to provide added security and reassurance to members of our team who have to work alone, whether it's a hire desk controller in an office or a service engineer working late at night on a construction site."



SAFETY EQUIPMENT & TRAINING FROM AFI

Safety Equipment

The following items of safety equipment are available from AFI:

Restraint harness with 1.8m lanyard £85.00

CE approved to EN361. Lightweight full body harness including lanyard. Stainless steel fittings. Adjustable leg loops, shoulders and chest. As recommended by IPAF, CPA and HSE through Technical Guidance Note H1/05/05.

Lanyard only £25.00

CE approved EN354. Adjustable restraint lanyard. Adjustable from 1.3m to 2.0m. As recommended by IPAF, CPA and HSE through Technical Guidance Note H1/05/05.

Anemometer £70.00

Pocket size 98 x 39 x 17mm. Windspeed in mph, km/h, m/s or knots. LCD back light. Auto power off. Neck lanyard. Water resistant.

Hi vis vest £5.00

Safety helmet £5.00

CE approved to EN397. Bold orange colouring.

Suspension trauma safety strap £20.00

Weighs only 91g and can be attached as two small zipped packs to most makes of harness.

To place your order
please call:

08707 871511

or email:

training@afi-platforms.co.uk

Training Courses

"...it is now a requirement for all employed personnel, both directly employed or self-employed... to select equipment for temporary working at height which gives adequate protection from falls."

*Temporary Working At Height
Amendment (2001/45/EC).*

Through AFI Training we offer a range of training courses:

IPAF Operator: Based on IPAF's Operator Safety Guide and all relevant national and international safety standards, these courses cover Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWP's) such as scissor lifts, self propelled booms, trailer mounted booms, personnel lifts, van and truck mounted and some special categories.

IPAF Harness: Approved by the Main Contractors Group (MCG) this course covers the safe and appropriate use of harnesses.

IPAF Safe Loading and Unloading: This course covers the correct safety procedures for the transport of access and plant machinery to obtain an IPAF transportation licence involving loading/unloading and securing.

PASMA Mobile Access Tower Training: The PASMA Training is a one day course. Upon successful completion candidates are issued with a PASMA identity card and certificate which is accepted and recognised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and is valid for a period of five years.

We also offer our own recognised versions of these courses.

For more information please call **08707 871511**

