

Two-post lifts provide for good under-vehicle access.



Frame-cradling adapters are recommended for two-post lifts.

Go Big — But Go Safely

LIFT MANUFACTURERS OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOPS.

To generate additional revenue, a growing number of light duty shops are expanding their businesses to service medium duty vehicles. Properly equipping their facilities and training their technicians to handle larger vehicles enables the shops to pursue maintenance and service contracts for local vocational (work truck) fleets.

Servicing larger vehicles requires the right equipment, starting with a heavy duty vehicle lift. Check the rated capacity of the lifts in most light duty shops and you won't find many that can pick up vehicles weighing more than 10,000 lbs. That means they are not adequate for vehicles larger than a Class 2 pickup truck like the Ford F-150. To service the Class 4 through 6 trucks that most vocational fleets rely on, shops need lifts that are rated for vehicles weighing up to 26,000 lbs.

There are a number of heavy duty lift styles to consider. Recognizing that this is the first time many shop owners have looked into buying a heavy duty lift, we contacted a number of lift manufacturers to gather recommendations. Interestingly, each representative recommended a different lift style. This means there are a number of potential solutions depending on the shop and the mix of vehicles to be serviced.

Since two-post surface lifts are so prevalent in North American light duty shops today, many shop owners may initially consider a higher-capacity version of this familiar lift style.

"Medium duty, two-post, above-ground lifts are popular because they give technicians the most under-vehicle access and leave wheels hanging free for tire and brake service," explains Steve Perlstein, president of Mohawk Lifts.

Four-post lifts are also available with

greater capacity than those often found in light duty shops.

"Medium duty four-post lifts offer the versatility to handle varying wheelbases and accommodate different weight distributions more easily, and they can disperse that weight throughout the runway," says Ryan Bentley, marketing director for Challenger Lifts.

Another lift style to consider is the double scissor lift.

"The advantages are clear in its space-saving design and excellent efficiency," says

Responsible Lift Manufacturers

In support of the Automotive Lift Institute (ALI) mission of promoting the safe design, construction, installation, inspection and use of vehicle lifts, members of ALI are required to third-party certify at least 75 percent of the lifts they sell. Additionally, ALI member manufacturers proudly provide a copy of ALI's *Lifting It Right* safety manual, *Vehicle Lifting Points Guide*, ANSI/ALI ALOIM (current edition), safety tips card and warning label kits with each lift they distribute.

Current ALI member companies are:

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Radu Pop, market research analyst, MAHA USA. "Up to five double scissor lifts install flush or surface mounted in the same space that would normally only accommodate four two-post lifts."

Similar options include parallelogram, scissor and pantograph platform lifts. These lift styles offer additional stability and are "more forgiving" than some other lift styles, according to Harold Yeo, president, Total Lifting Solutions.

Manufacturers also point out the flexibility of the mobile column lift.

"Mobile column lifts are the most cost-effective heavy duty lifts," explains Doug Spiller, heavy duty product manager at Rotary Lift. "Battery-operated models are compact, portable and easy to use. Just set them up when they're needed, and clear them out of the bay when they're not. That makes them perfect for shops that may not need the lifts for every job."

Talk to your lift supplier about which style(s) of lift would work best for your business today and into the future. When considering a new lift, remember to look for the Gold Label that signifies it has been third-party tested and certified to meet ANSI/ALI ALCTV:2011 standards.

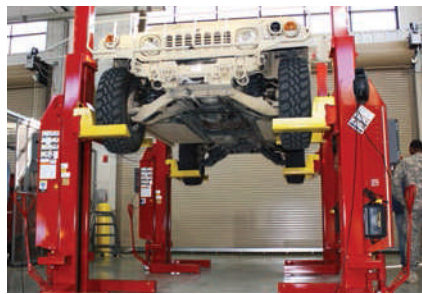
"The Gold Label is your ONLY assurance that the lift you're buying meets industry safety and performance standards," says R.W. "Bob" O'Gorman, president, Automotive Lift Institute (ALI). "Remember, your safety is riding on that lift. Why risk your livelihood on an uncertified lift?"

It's also important to choose the right accessories and adapters for a higher-capacity lift. Make sure the shop has the necessary adapters to reach the manufacturers' recommended pick-up points for the vehicles to be serviced. Never use homemade adapters.

"Explore how many different types of options and adapters can be added to the lift to speed a shop's efficiency," Perlstein suggests.

Bentley reminds shops that most medium duty vehicles are built on a frame. These vehicles have different lifting requirements than unibody vehicles.

"If a shop is adamant about purchas-



Mobile column lifts offer flexibility.

ing a two-post lift, we require the use of frame-engaging adapters when lifting a vehicle with a frame construction," he says. "Frame-cradling adapters reduce the risk of the vehicle's frame sliding off the lift's pads."

Also remember that lifting many work trucks is not as straightforward as it may initially appear. Take time to examine how the truck is equipped, especially in terms of weight distribution, before lifting it. ■



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