



Technical tests being conducted on typical aerial lift unit.

New company tests aerial lifts

A growing number of accidents are being recorded by users of aerial lift equipment. Nine of every ten such mishaps come about because of mechanical failure. Seldom does the insulation which is designed to protect the operator fail when a high voltage line is accidentally contacted. Insulation is more likely to be fail-safe than the mechanical phases of the unit.

Such are the findings of a new company known as American Safety Test at Morrow, Georgia, formed only for testing and inspecting aerial lift equipment. The units, known by such names as bucket trucks, cherry pickers or aerial lifts, need regular checks and service. Russell W. Tupper and Warren E. Tupper founders of the company, have more than 35 years of experience in working with aerial lift units.

They report owners and operators are almost totally concerned with the insulated components of such equipment and many are unaware of the fact that

mechanical failure is responsible for more accidents.

Their new safety testing and inspection program naturally includes what is commonly known as the dielectric test for both insulated aerial lift components and tools. This is basic, however, they go beyond this with five other major steps — one of which is a loading and stability test.

A third test is the complete analysis of hydraulic oil. Many times after a machine has been in service for an extended period or has been used under stress, the oil contains excess moisture, acid or picks up foreign materials which affect the reliability of the aerial equipment.

Another step and probably the most critical in preventing accidents and reducing costly repairs, is a complete professional visual and operational check of the total aerial lift, accessories, tools and safety equipment.

Other steps include a verbal question and answer period with the

operator and crew which confines discussions to safety instructions and proper operation of the equipment. It is important to point out that during these tests and inspections, the inspectors do not in any way convey the negative items to be reported to the operating crew or any other personnel present at the time of the inspection.

The next and last step is a practical and easy to understand report which is given the owners. This is a confidential report and is broken down into separate listings for safety hazards and mechanical discrepancies.

Safety hazards need to be corrected immediately according to AST. Mechanical discrepancies not considered hazardous immediately can be corrected at the regularly scheduled service. The AST officials also point out that the company does not make mechanical repairs or in any way service equipment. There is a test service only — geared to spot potential problems and prevent accidents.