

# Working at Height – Equipment

## 1. Mobile Elevating Work Platform – MEWP

### Introduction

The most significant MEWP dangers arise from operation and use of the machine rather than from their movement as a site vehicle. Legally, these hazards must be properly controlled.

Operators have died when trapped in the MEWP basket or when the machine has overturned. Great care must be taken to select the most appropriate MEWP and ensure that use of the machine is properly planned and managed. Operator instruction and training are very important requirements.

It is important to select the right MEWP for the job and site.

### Precautions

There are a number of precautions that can reduce the chances of an accident:

- **Confined overhead working** - if there are overhead structures that could trap the operator, think carefully about the MEWP to be used.
- **Ground conditions** - the platform should be used on firm and level ground.
- **Outriggers** - outriggers must be extended and chocked before raising the platform.
- **Guardrails** - make sure the work platform is fitted with effective guard rails and toe boards.
- **Arresting falls** - if there is a risk of the operator falling from the platform a harness with a work restraint lanyard must be secured.
- **Falling objects** - use a barrier to cordon-off the area around the platform so falling objects do not strike people below.



- **Weather** - if there are high winds, think carefully before using the MEWP. Inspect the platform before use after severe weather.
- **Handling materials** - if handling materials, check the weight and dimensions and consider any manual handling and load distribution issues. Additional lifting equipment may be required.
- **Nearby hazards** - do not operate a MEWP close to overhead cables or other dangerous machinery or allow any part of the arm to protrude into a traffic route.

### Training and competence

MEWP operators should have attended a recognised operator training course and received a certificate, card or 'licence', listing the categories of MEWP the bearer is trained to operate.

In addition to formal training for the type of MEWP, operators should have familiarisation training on the controls and operation of the specific make and model of MEWP they are using.

**IPAF** (International Powered Access Federation) is the organisation that promotes the safe and effective use of powered access machines (MEWPs) worldwide, including Cherry Pickers and Scissor Lifts. IPAF was formed in 1983 and is a 'not-for-profit' members organisation to represent the interests of manufacturers, distributors, users and hire and training companies.

## 2. Towers / Scaffold



Mobile access towers must be erected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and only by suitably trained and competent individuals. Incorrect use of a mobile access tower could result in serious injury to the operator or those around him/her.

**PASMA** (Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association) is the international not-for-profit association for the mobile access tower industry. Representing the interests of manufacturers, suppliers, specifiers and users, it provides and oversees the industry standard training scheme and is a major publisher of safety-related knowledge, information and guidance.