



## **Mobile Elevating Working Platforms Standards**

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### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of these mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPS) standards is to ensure that when work at height is carried out using a MEWP it is only done so where it has been identified via a working at height assessment and only used by a competent person.

The majority of work carried out at height on site is from a scaffold. A MEWP may be used from time to time to complete out of sequence work, where the scaffold has been struck and it is not viable to re build a scaffold or to carry out remedial or repair work.

A man cage is not a suitable alternative to a MEWP.

### **2. Training, competence and equipment**

As a general rule site workers are not trained to operate MEWPs, therefore when a MEWP is required it should be hired with a trained operator who holds an International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) qualification, the operator's IPAF card must be checked by site management on induction. When the MEWP is hired it should also come with the necessary amount of harnesses for the operators that will be in the basket.

If a site worker is qualified to operate a MEWP their card should be checked by site management and details recorded on their induction records prior to operating the MEWP and a risk assessment completed.

### **3. MEWP hazards**

Most fatal and serious injuries involving MEWPs arise from:

#### **Entrapment**

Operator trapped between part of the basket and a fixed structure, eg when manoeuvring in confined overhead areas of steelwork. Operators may become trapped against the platform controls, and if this happens they may not be able to stop the machine running.

#### **Overturning**

The machine may overturn throwing the operator from the basket.

#### **Falling**

An operator may fall from the basket during work activities

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Collision

The vehicle may collide with pedestrians, overhead cables or nearby vehicles.

These hazards must be identified within a risk assessment and suitable control measures put in place.

**4. Controlling the risk**

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

Also there must be a plan for rescuing someone from a MEWP which has been practiced. Someone on the ground must know what to do in an emergency and how to operate the machine's ground controls.

There are a number of precautions that can reduce the risk from MEWP hazards. These are:

Confined overhead working

Brief operators on the dangers, and the safe system of work to be followed. If there are overhead structures against which an operator could be trapped and then pushed onto the MEWP controls, consider selecting a MEWP that has been designed to prevent such accidental contact. MEWPs with shrouded or otherwise protected controls are available. Keeping the platform tidy will reduce the risk of the operator tripping or losing balance while in the basket.

Ground conditions

The platform should be used on firm and level ground. Any temporary covers should be strong enough to withstand the applied pressure. Localised ground features, e.g. trenches, manholes and un-compacted backfill, can all lead to overturning.

Outriggers

Outriggers must be extended and chocked before raising the platform. Spreader plates may be necessary, check the equipment manual.

Guardrails

Make sure the work platform is fitted with effective guard rails and toe boards.

Arresting falls

If there is still a risk of people falling from the platform a harness with a short work restraint lanyard must be secured to a suitable manufacturer provided anchorage point within the basket to stop the wearer from getting into a position where they could fall from the carrier. Harnesses should not be worn if working over water.

Falling objects

Barrier off the area around the platform so that falling tools or objects do not strike people below.

Weather

High winds can tilt platforms and make them unstable, set a maximum safe wind speed for operation. Storms and snowfalls can also damage platforms. Inspect the platform before use and after severe weather.

Handling materials

If used to install materials check the weight and dimensions of materials and consider any manual handling and load distribution issues. You may need additional lifting equipment to transport materials to the work position.

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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.

**6. Inspection, maintenance and examination**

An inspection and maintenance regime must be carried out by the supplier.

A programme of daily visual checks, regular inspections and servicing schedules should be established in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the risks associated with each MEWP.

Operators must be encouraged to report defects or problems. Reported problems should be put right quickly and the MEWP taken out of service if the item is safety critical.

The MEWP must be thoroughly examined at least every six months by a competent person or in accordance with an examination scheme drawn up by such a competent person.

**7. Monitoring**

Site management monitors the safe use of MEWPS via daily site checks. The Group HS&E Department monitors compliance with these standards via regular site HS&E inspections.

**8. Further reading**

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis6.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/mewp.htm>

<https://www.ipaf.org/en-us>

**9. Tool Box Talk**

Refer to HSMS [TBT](#) – W@H Mobile Elevating Working Platforms

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Version 1 Sections 1,2,3, 4,5,6,7,8	08.11.2021

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