Promoting the safe and effective use of powered access

USE PERSONAL FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PFPE) TO PREVENT FALLS FROM A MEWP

TOOLBOX TALK

WHY AM I AT RISK OF FALLING FROM A MEWP?

When working at height in a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP), one of the leading causes of death and severe injury is falls from the platform.

These falls may be caused by:

- Climbing in or out of the platform, over-reaching, standing on or leaning too far over the guardrails; modifying the guardrails, modifying the functionality of the entry and exit points; etc.
- Objects hitting the platform or MEWP structure causing sudden and unexpected movement.
- The MEWP (or parts thereof) being hit by a passing vehicle.
- Driving over unsuitable ground.
- The MEWP becoming snagged on a structure, resulting in a catapult effect. This sudden movement may eject the occupants out of the work platform.

WHAT PROTECTION IS AVAILABLE TO PREVENT FALLING FROM THE PLATFORM?

The primary fall protection for MEWPs is the platform guardrails. It is important the platform occupants always stand on the platform floor and remain within the guardrails.

To prevent the platform occupants from being ejected from boom-type MEWPs (1b, 2b, 3b), use a full-body harness and a short, adjustable lanyard. The length of the lanyard should be short enough to keep the platform occupants within the platform in case of a catapult event while allowing them to complete their work tasks. The platform occupants should connect their lanyards to the designated lanyard anchorage points in the platform as shown in the operator's manual and MEWP platform decals.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This Toolbox talk applies to:

- MEWP operators
- Site manager and supervisors where MEWPs are in use
- User (who has control of the use of the MEWP on site)

The use of personal fall-protection equipment (PFPE) on scissor and most vertical mast lifts **(Types 1a and 3a) is only needed if determined by your risk assessment. These machines are typically not subject to the catapult effect.**

WORKING NEXT TO OR OVER WATER

When working over or near water, the use of a life jacket may be considered as an alternative to a harness and lanyard. The need for a fall-protection system or life jacket will be the outcome of a job-specific risk assessment undertaken prior to beginning work and taking into consideration the manufacturer's operator manual.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Conduct a risk assessment prior to all temporary work at height to determine PFPE requirements for your machine type and task. If required by the risk assessment, use a **full body harness** and **adjustable lanyard(s)** to provide fall restraint.

Check you have the correct length lanyard(s)!
The lanyard, when secured to the designated anchorage point, must be short enough to stop the worker from

- being ejected and
- over-reaching over the guardrails.

The lanyard can be used with or without a shock-absorbing device as part of a restraint system. An adjustable-length lanyard may be used but is only effective in restraint if it has been shortened to the appropriate length.

USEFUL REFERENCES

- H1 technical guidance notice (available at www.ipaf.org/resources)
- IPAF MEWP Operator's Safety Guide
- Andy Access A1 *Attach your Lanyard* poster (available at www.ipaf.org/andyaccess)
- Manufacturer's Operators Manual (available via www.ipaf.org/en/manufacturers)
- IPAF MEWP Operator course and IPAF Harness Inspection course