



## MEWP OPERATION

### INTRODUCTION

Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWP) are useful but complex pieces of equipment that are often used for access in hazardous areas. People have been seriously injured and killed in accidents involving MEWP.

The causes of these accidents have included:

- Inadequate training and supervision;
- Not following the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Equipment failure;
- Failure to fully assess the hazards and risks of the job, site and the equipment.

It is absolutely imperative that those responsible for planning the use of MEWP ensure that the correct type of machine is selected for the work activity to be carried out and that operators are competent to operate the type of machine being used.



### MEWP TRAINING

The HSW (GRWM) Regulations 2016 impose duties on PCBUs – employers and the like; in relation to the provision of instruction, training, instruction and supervision of workers.

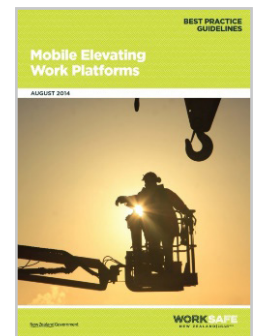
The MEWP Best Practice Guidelines (2014) outline the safe work practices on how to use and maintain MEWP safely and help duty holders meet their obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

The Guidelines state that “an employer or principle (e.g. a PCBU or person in charge of a workplace) must make sure that the operator is adequately trained by a competent person and can demonstrate their competency before using any equipment”.

The Guidelines further state that “A MEWP operator must also be able to demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills needed to do effective hazard and risk assessment in their operating location”.

An area often overlooked when considering the risks associated with MEWP is that of transportation. Statistics suggest that around a third of all MEWP accidents occur during transportation, and in particular during loading and unloading operations.

All MEWP require some form of transportation, be it on the back of a low-loader, or being towed behind a truck. Either way the importance of ensuring that people required to transport MEWP are trained and competent to do so. Training must include loading and unloading procedures.



## MEWP OPERATION

Many MEWP accidents are caused by operators striking other objects, particularly when driving the machine around. Operators should raise the basket to improve both visibility and ground clearance. With self-propelled boom lifts it is recommended to raise the 'fly-jib' (where fitted) to achieve this rather than the main boom, as this helps to maintain a lower centre of gravity.

Another area of concern is the number of 'roll-over' accidents caused by uneven or insecure surfaces and during loading/unloading operations.

## MEWP MAINTENANCE

Use the MEWP manufacturer's approved maintenance manual to develop a preventative maintenance programme, which must take into account the working environment, how often the machine is used and the severity of conditions in which it is used.

## LOGBOOK AND REGISTERS

The MEWP logbook and register is a record of pre-operation and routine inspections, and any other form of maintenance carried out on the machine. They should be kept with the MEWP and be readily available for inspection.

## RECORDS

The MEWP owner must keep records of all maintenance activity in the MEWP's logbook:

- Daily pre-operation reports – last 14 days of operation, or since the last routine inspection;
- A summary statement of the last routine inspection;
- A summary statement of the last major inspection;
- A summary statement of the last six-monthly inspection;
- Action taken or repairs carried out to fix faults or damaged parts.

## PRE-OPERATION INSPECTION

The operator must give the MEWP a visual inspection and functional test before using it. The checks should include the terms listed in the operator's manual and the logbook.



Areas often overlooked include:

- Batteries – must be charged in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines – do not over-charge;
- PAT testing – electrically charged machines should be tested and tagged in accordance with relevant A/NZ Standards – generally speaking this means every 6 months (refer to manufacturer's instructions);
- Hydraulic leaks – need to top up – think leak;
- Log Books – not being completed correctly.

## PPE REQUIREMENTS

- Harnesses – certified and connected to an approved anchor point – and ideally connected to the rear 'D' unless work conditions dictate otherwise;
- Hard hats – complete with chin straps – last line of defence for your head!

## NOTIFICATION OF PARTICULAR HAZARDOUS WORK

The Health and Safety in Employment Regulations 1995 require PCBUs as well as the person who controls a place of work to provide at least 24 hour's notice to WorkSafe of particularly hazardous work. An example of work that might require notification is 'Construction work – where any person may fall 5 metres or more'. If in doubt contact your local WorkSafe office for guidance.

**If you are working with MEWP,  
remember the old saying  
“Look up and Live!”**

