Issue 42 of 2020 – 12 November

MOBILE ELEVATING PLATFORM TIP OVERS

Members are advised that in recent months SafeWork NSW has been notified of 2 separate serious incidents where workers using mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) have resulted in tip overs.

Kingswood
Date of Incident: 17 April 2020

A worker on a manually propelled scissor type MEWP, approximately 3 metres high, was using a handheld battery powered screw gun to affix cladding panels to the side of a steel structure. The force applied by the worker in drilling the screws contributed to the MEWP tipping and impacting the ground. The worker sustained bruising to his arm and shoulder as a result of the incident.

Tamworth
Date of Incident: 20 July 2020

An electrician and an apprentice were using a scissor type MEWP to remove 34 metres of conduit, containing an electrical cable, from the side of a two-storey building.

The MEWP was elevated to just below 6 metres and driven on a concrete path as the brackets were removed one by one. When the final bracket was removed the workers lifted the conduit over their heads and dropped it to the ground. It fell onto the handrail of the platform.

The weight and momentum of the conduit contributed to the MEWP to tipping over with both workers inside. Both workers suffered spinal fractures and one worker a fractured eye socket.

WORKHEALTH&SAFETY

Safety Information

If working at height, planning should be undertaken to ensure the safest method and correct equipment is used for the job. The decision to use a specific MEWP should not be based solely on the availability of a MEWP at a workplace.

When selecting the type of MEWP to be used be aware of the limitations regarding terrain, slope, wind loading and manual side force. Some MEWPs are not designed for outdoor use or have different operation limitations for outdoor use. Note a maximum side manual force of 200 N is equivalent to a 20kg force at waist height.

If you have determined that a MEWP is the most suitable method to perform the work at height, you must implement 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risks associated with using the MEWP throughout the job.

These include:

- choose the right MEWP for the job and only use it for the purpose it was designed
- ensure that information, instruction and training is provided to workers who use MEWPs
- train workers in emergency procedures so occupants can be rescued in the event of an emergency
- hold a high-risk work licence for boom type MEWPs with a boom length over 11 metres
- carry out a prestart (pre-operational) inspection and record the information in the logbook
- ensure the MEWP is suitable for the ground conditions, including gradeability
- do not exceed the safe working load of the platform (some MEWPs have dual ratings to limit the number of people in the platform if used outdoors)
- do not exceed the manual side force (as shown on the compliance plate) when carrying out activities such as drilling, pushing
- do not work in locations where the loss of control of external objects could impact the platform of the MEWP, e.g. tree branches, steelwork
- do not use indoor rated MEWPs outdoors
- make sure outdoor rated MEWPs are not operated outside if wind speed rating exceeds the maximum limits (as shown on the compliance plate)
- wear a safety harness if there is a risk of falling from a height and ensure it is attached to a designated anchor point on the MEWP

Further information

You can also refer to the following guidance materials:

- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017*:*
  - *Clause 214 – Powered mobile plant – General control of risk*
- SafeWork NSW – Code of practice – Managing the risk of plant in the workplace
- SafeWork NSW – Code of practice – Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- AS 2550.10-2006 Cranes hoists and winches – Safe use – Mobile elevating work platforms

View the latest incident information releases at safework.nsw.gov.au