



# Best Practice Guidance for MEWPs

## Avoiding Trapping / Crushing Injuries to People in the Platform



**Strategic Forum for Construction  
Plant Safety Group**



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**Working in Partnership**

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## Foreword

Every year, the construction industry is responsible for causing deaths and serious injury. The industry has done much to improve its performance which I welcome, but there is still room for improvement. Our industry is innovative and equipment is constantly evolving and developing so that construction processes can become increasingly efficient. This has consequences for site management who must ensure that operators are competent, capable of operating equipment safely and are following safe working procedures.

A mobile elevating work platform (often referred to as a MEWP) saves time and makes work at height efficient, effective and safer than using traditional methods of access. When used safely, MEWPs significantly reduce the risk of injuries through falling from height.

Unfortunately over the past few years a significant number of accidents involving the use of MEWPs have occurred, including tragically fatalities. Some of these incidents have involved the operator or other person being crushed against fixtures or other obstacles while accessing their work area, or while working at height. The incidents could have been prevented by correct planning and preparation, selection of appropriate machinery and proper use.

In addition to the terrible cost in human suffering, accidents have a financial cost. There is a very strong business case for improving safety performance. This guidance has been prepared by the industry to provide clarity about the safe use of MEWPs including planning, equipment selection, and training, provision of information, familiarization, safe use, supervision and rehearsal of rescue procedures, together with monitoring of the whole process.

The guidance is straightforward, comprehensive and easy to adopt. It represents best practice. I would particularly like to thank those involved in its preparation and commend the guidance to anyone who owns, supplies or controls the operation of MEWPs. Please read the publication and turn the advice into action.



**Phillip White**

HM Chief Inspector of Construction

Chair of the HSE Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC).

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## Introduction

The use of mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) is increasing as the benefits for productivity and safety are recognised. They are acknowledged by many to be the safest and most efficient means of providing temporary access to height for many work activities.

The increased use of MEWPs in construction, maintenance and other applications where trapping risks are present has led to accidents in which people on the platform have been trapped between the platform (often referred to as a cage or basket) and objects in the work area. In some cases these accidents involved fatality. Managers must take a lead in identifying when trapping risks are present in the work activities they control. Where trapping risks are present extra care is needed and all involved must understand what they need to do to avoid or reduce the risks involved.



Accidents can be avoided if good practice is encouraged and followed. The basis of preventing trapping accidents must be task, site and equipment **specific** risk assessment. All involved in the management and operation of MEWPs need to understand how to minimise the risks of someone being trapped in the basket and the importance of having effective rescue procedures should such an entrapment occur.

## How to use this guidance

This guidance has been produced by the Strategic Forum for Construction Plant Safety Group. It has been split into two parts. Part 1 is aimed at planners, managers, and trainers. It provides information on hazards, risk assessment, controls and responsibilities. The annexes to Part 1 provide detailed information which can assist in the identification of trapping risks and in the planning and managing of work activities to protect against entrapment accidents.

Part 2 is aimed at those using and supervising MEWPs and responsible for rescuing anyone trapped on a MEWP platform. Part 2 has been designed to be used in briefings or toolbox talks for supervisors and MEWP operators.

There may appear to be some repetition in Parts 1 and 2 of this document. This is deliberate to allow Parts 1 and 2 to be used either together or independently. Each part of the document is self contained but one complements the other.

Note that this document is not intended to be complete guidance on all aspects of MEWP operation.

Operators of MEWP must at all times be trained and competent.

All references to regulations and other statutory instruments are made to UK legislation.

# Strategic Forum for Construction Plant Safety Group

## Best Practice Guidance for MEWPs Avoiding Trapping / Crushing Injuries to People in the Platform

### Part 1: Guidance for planners, managers and trainers

#### 1. Purpose of Part 1

Anyone involved in planning work with MEWPs, specifying equipment, managing work and organising training for those working with MEWPs should read Part 1, which includes guidance on the hazards to be considered and ways of controlling risk.

Note that this document is not intended to be complete guidance on all aspects of MEWP operation.

Operators of MEWP must at all times be trained and competent.

#### 2. Typical hazards, causal factors and control measures

2.1 **Annexes 1 and 2** give typical hazards that may be present. They describe causal factors for such hazards, such as overhead obstructions in the path of the MEWP, or leaning over the guard rails. The guidance identifies measures which can help to protect against the hazards identified and should be considered as part of the risk assessment. The list is comprehensive but not exhaustive.

## 3. Planning

### 3.1 Method of work

3.1.1 Consideration should be given to:

- the need for carrying out the work at height, e.g. whether or not the work could be carried out at ground level,
- sequencing activities to avoid the presence of obstructions that could cause trapping risks, and
- adopting alternative working methods that avoid or reduce trapping risks when using a MEWP.

3.1.2 **Annex 3** lists factors that need to be taken into account when planning work at height that involves trapping risks, e.g. identifying the range of work and selecting equipment to minimise the chances of trapping occurring.

### 3.2 Risk assessment

3.2.1 The hazards referred to in **Annexes 1 & 2** and guidance in **Annex 3** should be taken into account when formulating safe methods of working. Risk assessment should cover:-

- travelling to and from the work area,
- accessing the work area, and
- working at height.

3.2.2 Particular attention should be given to lighting levels – additional task or personal lighting may be necessary but it needs careful design.

3.2.3 The risk assessment should be recorded. It should also be reviewed and revised, as necessary, while work is carried out. For further advice on risk assessment, see INDG163 (HSE)<sup>(1)</sup> and BS 8460:2005<sup>(2)</sup>.

### 3.3 MEWP selection

3.3.1 Selecting a MEWP with the right operating characteristics can substantially reduce the risk of entrapment. When selecting a MEWP, account should be taken of the manufacturer's instructions and, in particular the operating parameters and limits specified.

3.3.2 Vertical lift, articulated boom and telescopic boom MEWPs allow a wide variety and different sequences of platform movements to be performed. The information provided by the risk assessment (*see section 3.2*) on the nature of trapping risks and when the risks occur will aid decisions on the type and model of MEWP best suited to avoid trapping risks.

3.3.3 Many MEWPs have an up-stand above the platform control panel to prevent the operator's hands being trapped against overhead objects, as required by European Standard EN 280:2001 + A2:2009<sup>(3)</sup>. On some MEWPs this up-stand may prevent the operator's upper body being pushed downwards onto the controls but it can create a trapping risk if the operator leans over it while moving the platform. A stand-off bar is fitted on some MEWPs in front of the control panel which prevents the operator's lower body being pushed horizontally against the controls. Control panels may have the controls sunk into the top of them and they may have features that prevent objects placed on the panel contacting the controls. There is no one feature that prevents the operator contacting the controls but a combination of the above can reduce the risk.

3.3.4 **Annex 4** lists important factors that need to be taken into account when selecting a MEWP for use, e.g. use on rough terrain or indoor/outdoor use.

- 3.3.5 Wherever planners/managers are uncertain about the best MEWP for the work they should seek further expert advice, e.g. from a hire company or manufacturer.
- 3.3.6 When selecting a MEWP for use, the circumstances in which it will be used must be taken into account. If this assessment indicates that the fitment of additional equipment or devices may overall improve the safe use of the MEWP during the task, then before fitment, the process in **Section 6** should be followed. This will help ensure that full consideration is given to both the positive and negative health and safety effects of fitting the device and legal considerations.

### **3.4 Safe system of work**

- 3.4.1 A safe system of work (SSW) should be devised to ensure that work tasks can be carried out safely. Key elements of the SSW should be written down. This could take the form of a safety method statement as commonly used in the construction industry or any other appropriate record.
- 3.4.2 The SSW should be based on risk assessment (see section 3.2) and identify the
- type of MEWPs to be used (see **Annex 4**),
  - hazards that need to be taken into account (see **Annexes 1 & 2**) when travelling to, accessing or working in the work area,
  - control measures to be adopted (see Annexes 1 and 2),
  - competence and training requirements (see Section 5) for those involved in the work, and
  - emergency arrangements (see section 3.5).
- 3.4.3 The SSW should be communicated to all persons involved in the planning and management of the work tasks.
- 3.4.4 The hazards identified and control measures to be adopted should be communicated to those who supervise and carry out the work tasks.

### **3.5 Emergency plan and drills**

#### *Rescue Plans*

- 3.5.1 It is a legal requirement to plan for emergencies and rescue when anyone is working at height. Rescuing quickly someone who has become trapped can make a very significant difference to the injuries sustained – it may be the difference between life and death. There must always be someone at ground level who is able to take action in the event of an emergency while a MEWP is in use and trapping risks are present.
- 3.5.2 A suitable rescue plan must be developed to ensure that emergency recovery can be carried out safely and quickly in the event of an operator or anyone else becoming trapped between the platform and an adjacent object.
- 3.5.3 MEWP operators, supervisors and others involved should be briefed on and practice the emergency procedures to follow if someone becomes trapped.

#### *Locating emergency controls*

- 3.5.4 The location of the operator's instruction manual should be identified in the emergency plan so those people who are authorised to operate the ground and emergency controls can refer to it.
- 3.5.5 The International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) has developed an "Emergency Descent" decal (see **Annex 5**). This can be used in conjunction with existing manufacturer's symbols on the MEWP to aid location of the emergency controls.



### *Periodic drills*

3.5.6 The emergency descent controls and systems are often specific to individual machines. As such, periodic drills should be required for those who have on-site responsibility for the rescue of a trapped person. These drills must include practising the use of the ground controls and emergency controls for each machine in use.

## **3.6 Co-ordination with other activities and preparation of work areas**

3.6.1 MEWPs will rarely be used in isolation from other work activities and preparations are likely to be required to enable them to be used safely in work areas where trapping risks are present. The work should be planned taking these issues into account. The people responsible for the following activities should be identified and their responsibilities defined in the safe system of work:

- maintaining overhead objects on any designated travel route that MEWPs are expected to use,
- preparing and maintaining the ground that MEWPs are expected to work on,
- managing the areas below and around the work at height, and
- taking control of emergency operations.

## 4. Supervision and monitoring

- 4.1 Supervisors should be instructed in and supplied with SSWs for the work they are expected to control.
- 4.2 Supervisors should monitor the work and provide advice for the review and revision of the risk assessments and SSWs as the work progresses.
- 4.3 It is recommended that supervisors are familiar with the contents of **Part 2** of this guidance.

## 5. Competency and training

### 5.1 Competency

#### 5.1.1 All involved in:

- risk assessment,
- planning,
- managing,
- supervising, and
- carrying out the work tasks, including rescue operations,

should have sufficient:

- training,
- knowledge,
- experience, and
- delegated authority from their employer

to enable them to identify trapping risks and carry out their duties safely at the level of responsibility assigned to them.

#### 5.1.2 The person who formulates the SSW should:-

- understand the MEWP characteristics and the nature of the work to be carried out;
- be capable of identifying site hazards that could lead to trapping accidents (See **Annexes 1 and 2**);
- have the ability to communicate the results of their findings to those responsible for managing MEWP activities. This can be on-site management, contractor's staff and/or principal contractor's staff depending on the arrangements that are in place to ensure that the risk assessment is understood and implemented.

### 5.2 Training

#### *Site Management*

- 5.2.1 Managers with responsibility for work where people on the platform may be trapped between the platform and objects in the work area should have knowledge of the factors that should be considered before selecting a MEWP for use. They should also understand the risks involved in the work when MEWPs are in use. General guidance is provided in HSE Information Sheet CIS 58<sup>(4)</sup>. This Best Practice Guidance supplements CIS 58 and gives specific advice to deal with the potential for trapping.

5.2.2 A “MEWPs for Managers” training course <sup>(5)</sup> is available for people who manage work activities involving MEWPs.

### *Supervisors*

5.2.3 Supervisors should be instructed in the hazards, causal factors, and control measures identified in the task specific risk assessments for the work to be carried out (**Annexes 1 and 2**). They should be familiar with the plans for the work to be carried out (**Annex 3**) and take part in regular on site emergency lowering drills (**Annex 7**). In addition, it is recommended that supervisors are familiar with the contents of **Part 2** of this guidance.

### *MEWP operators*

5.2.4.1 Operators must:

- be competent to operate the MEWP in the working conditions to which they are exposed,
- be instructed in local hazards and site rules,
- have attended a recognised basic training course, and
- be familiar with the make and model of MEWP they are authorised to operate.

5.2.4.2 It is important to ensure that the operator has received basic training in the correct category of MEWP that they will use (see **Annex 6**).

5.2.4.3 In addition to basic training, operators should be familiarised with the controls, characteristics, safety devices, decals and emergency rescue systems on the MEWPs they are authorised to operate. Before operating a particular make and model of MEWP, the operator should be able to prove that they have received familiarisation on that type of machine, for example through entries in his/her log book (or similar). If this cannot be demonstrated then the operator should undergo familiarisation, or if they are authorised to do so by their employer, self-familiarise themselves using the manufacturer’s instructions. Further advice on familiarisation is given in Technical Guidance Note F1/08/07<sup>(6)</sup>.

5.2.4.3 It is recommended that operators are familiar with the contents of **Part 2** of this guidance

### *Rescuers*

5.2.5.1 Rescuers must:

- be competent to lower the MEWP platform using the ground/emergency controls in the work situations to which they are exposed;
- be instructed in local hazards and site rules;
- be familiar with the rescue procedures for the type of MEWP they are authorised to operate;
- be aware of what to do if the load control has tripped and/or the emergency control has been activated in the platform.

5.2.5.2 Rescuers at ground level do not need to be trained as MEWP operators but they must be trained by their employer and be competent to carry out rescue operations. They should be familiarised with the safety devices on the MEWP in use, its emergency lowering systems and ground controls. They should check the emergency lowering functions with the operator during the daily pre-use checks.

5.2.5.3 Rescuers should be trained in the procedures to follow when rescuing people (**Annex 7**) and take part in on site emergency lowering drills

5.2.5.4 It is recommended that rescuers are familiar with the contents of **Part 2** of this guidance.

## **5.3 Records**

Records should be kept of the training received.

## 6. Fitting additional devices or equipment on MEWPs

- 6.1 Task specific risk assessment may indicate that fitting additional equipment or device(s) to a MEWP may provide additional safety in particular types of work. If you wish to fit additional equipment or devices then you should obtain advice from a person or body who is competent to assess whether or not such a change to the MEWP will compromise its safety. You may consult the MEWP manufacturer but should note that health and safety law does not oblige manufacturers to give advice on the fitting of additional equipment or devices on their products.
- 6.2 There are specific legal requirements which need to be understood and followed by anyone who fits additional equipment or device(s) on a MEWP. The main requirements to be considered are the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008. The Regulations both originate in European Directives and are complementary.

### *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)<sup>(7)</sup>*

- 6.2.1 Before putting MEWPs into use for the first time in the UK, PUWER Regulation 10 requires the user to satisfy himself that the MEWP complies with the essential health and safety requirements of the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008. Normally, compliance may be presumed if the MEWP is CE marked and accompanied by a valid Declaration of Conformity.
- 6.2.2 PUWER Regulation 4(1) allows work equipment to be adapted, for example, for the specific operations and conditions in which it is used. Regulation 4(2) requires that adaptations must not increase the overall risks associated with its use (see Section 3.3.6).

### *Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008 (SMS)<sup>(8)</sup>*

- 6.2.3 Under Regulation 7(1) before placing machinery, such as a MEWP, on the market and/or putting it into service, the manufacturer or his authorised representative shall:
- (a) ensure that it satisfies the relevant essential health and safety requirements (EHSRs);
  - (b) ensure that the technical file is available;
  - (c) provide, in particular, the necessary information, such as instructions;
  - (d) carry out the appropriate procedures for assessing conformity;
  - (e) draw up the EC declaration of conformity and ensure that it accompanies the MEWP;
  - (f) affix the CE marking to the MEWP.

If you substantially modify a MEWP then you become the new MEWP manufacturer and are responsible for complying with SMS. There is no definition of what is a substantial modification.

- 6.2.4 MEWPs are Annex IV machinery under Directive 2006/42/EC so they are subject to special conformity assessment procedures. European Standard EN 280:2001+ A2:2009<sup>(3)</sup> is a harmonised standard under the Directive and provides guidance on how MEWP designs can comply with the EHSRs of 2006/42/EC. Manufacturers can choose to assess conformity against the standard or against the EHSRs. To assist them to comply with the Directive manufacturers normally choose to have their designs examined and certified by Notified Bodies. The Directive also allows manufacturers to self-certify their designs by demonstrating full compliance with EN 280.
- 6.2.5 Additional equipment or device(s) may be classed under SMS as safety components. Safety components have to comply with Regulation 7(1) in the same way as machinery (see section 6.2.3). Compliance with Regulation 7(1) means only that the safety component meets the EHSRs relevant to the safety component. Before fitting any safety component to a MEWP you should follow the procedure given in “*Additional devices or equipment*” (see Section 6.2.6) to ensure that the device is suitable for use with the MEWP.

### *Additional devices or equipment*

- 6.2.6 If additional devices or equipment are proposed to be fitted to a MEWP then further risk assessment is required before such a change is made. You will need to have available all relevant technical details of the MEWP and for the additional devices or equipment that you

intend to fit. Risk assessment must show that the proposed change protects against the trapping risks identified and that, at least, it does not:

- increase the consequences of injury in a trapping accident
- create new or additional risks that outweigh the trapping risks addressed (taking account of all the ways in which the MEWP is used including areas where trapping risks are not present)
- adversely affect the:
  - operation of controls and any MEWP movements
  - performance and reliability of control systems
  - reliability of components
- cause ergonomic hazards for the MEWP operator or anyone else in the platform
- cause distractions to the operator that could affect safe operation of the MEWP
- encourage bad operating practices that could affect the safety of the MEWP in use
- restrict access to the platform controls, particularly in an emergency
- prevent the MEWP from being used for applications in which it is acknowledged to be safe

#### *Responsibility*

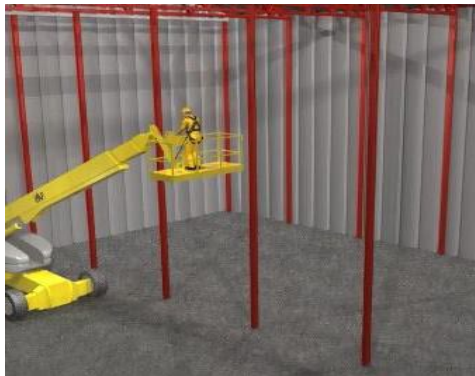
6.2.7 The responsibility for any adaptation, addition or modification and the associated risk assessment lies with the person who modifies the MEWP. The safety of the adaptation, addition or modification and the safety of any parts of the MEWP that it may affect must be ensured. Under these circumstances the original manufacturer is not liable for the adaptation, addition or modification or any effects it has on the safety and performance of the MEWP. The person carrying out the adaptation, addition or modification takes on these responsibilities and may become liable for the safety of the complete MEWP.

#### *Consultation with the manufacturer and your insurers*

6.2.8. Advice provided by the MEWP manufacturer on the adaptation, addition or modification you propose or the additional devices or equipment that you wish to fit should be taken into account.

6.2.9 It is recommended that you discuss the fitting of the additional devices or equipment with your insurer if you think that they could be classed as modifications that could affect your insurance.

## Annex 1: Hazards, Causal Factors and Control Measures: Travelling to and from the work area



**Note: the Table does not imply any priority order for the hazards, causal factors and examples of control measures**

Hazard	Typical causal factors	Examples of control measures
Overhead obstructions in the path of the MEWP	Overhead obstructions that come close to the top of the platform while the MEWP is travelling can cause an operator to become trapped between the platform and the obstruction	<p>Choose an appropriate size of model and type of MEWP for the access route required</p> <p>Where possible, choose a route that avoids overhead obstructions.</p> <p>Ensure sufficient clearance when travelling under or past overhead obstructions taking account of the platform movements that can occur when travelling.</p> <p>Do not use excessive speed when close to obstructions.</p> <p>On MEWPs with platforms controls that can be operated remote from the platform use the remote control rather than squeeze past obstructions and stand sufficiently clear of movement</p>
Leaning over the platform guardrails or control panel	Leaning over the platform guardrails or control panel to view the MEWP base, wheels or tracks while travelling distracts the operator's view of overhead obstructions	Thoroughfares for MEWPs should be kept clear.
Losing control of the platform controls	Trapping of the operator against the platform controls while the MEWP is travelling prevents the operator from controlling MEWP movements and increases the likelihood of serious injury in a trapping incident	<p>Do not lean over the platform controls while moving.</p> <p>Avoid distractions, e.g. use of mobile phone, while travelling or moving the platform.</p> <p>Don't put objects on the platform control panel that could move and activate the controls.</p>

Hazard	Typical causal factors	Examples of control measures
		Do not place materials on the guard rails that could move and distract the operator.
Lighting conditions making overhead obstructions in the path of the MEWP difficult to see	Poor/inadequate lighting of the vehicle route in areas where overhead obstructions exist can make it difficult for the MEWP operator to notice the obstructions	Provide adequate background and task lighting where necessary, taking into account weather, time of day, seasonal changes and the work environment. Additional lighting needs careful design.
Pedestrians or vehicles in the path of and around the MEWP	Pedestrians or other vehicles around or in the path of the MEWP can distract the MEWP operator while approaching an overhead obstruction	Segregate traffic routes so far as possible.  Use a banksman (lookout) whenever necessary in areas where pedestrians will be present.  Pedestrians should wear high visibility clothing.
Uneven ground, steps, trenches etc.	Travelling over uneven ground, steps, open trenches and objects on the ground causes vertical work platform movements that may trap operators against overhead obstructions	Ensure the ground conditions are suitable for the MEWP to travel on. When travelling on boom MEWPs, adjust the platform position to give adequate view of the MEWP base/wheels and to minimise vertical platform movements.  Travel at a speed that ensures platform movements are controlled.
Objects on the ground in the path of the MEWP	Operators may lean over the platform guardrails or control panel to view objects on the ground while travelling thus distracting their view of overhead obstructions	Before gaining access walk the route and remove obstacles.

## Annex 2: Hazards, Causal Factors and Control Measures: Accessing the work area and working at height



**Note: the Table does not imply any priority order for the hazards, causal factors and examples of control measures**

Hazard	Typical causal factors	Examples of control measures
Overhead obstructions adjacent to the path that the platform needs to follow while being raised into the work area at height	<p>Using the wrong type or size of MEWP for the nature of access required</p> <p>Mistakes, rushing to get the job done and lack of concentration can cause the MEWP operator to drive the platform into overhead obstructions using the lift, slew and/or travel controls</p>	<p>Telescopic boom, articulated boom and vertical lift MEWPs have different access characteristics and the most suitable type should be chosen for the work tasks to be carried out and the environment in which it is used</p> <p>Plan/synchronise work tasks to avoid the presence of unnecessary obstructions</p>
Overhead obstructions while working in the work area	<p>Overhead objects close to the work platform can present immediate trapping risks when the platform or MEWP is moved using the lift/lower, slew or travel controls</p> <p>Obstructions below head height can present immediate risks when starting to move the platform</p> <p>Operator not moving the platform sufficiently clear of an obstruction before operating the MEWP travel or slew controls <i>[NOTE : rapid platform movements can be created when the slew and main boom lift controls are operated]</i></p>	<p>When close to obstructions use the controls in the following general sequence:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- drive</li> <li>- elevate</li> <li>- slew</li> <li>- telescope</li> <li>- fine control</li> </ul> <p>Always ensure adequate vertical clearance between the highest point of the platform and any obstruction when driving or elevating/slewing the platform</p>



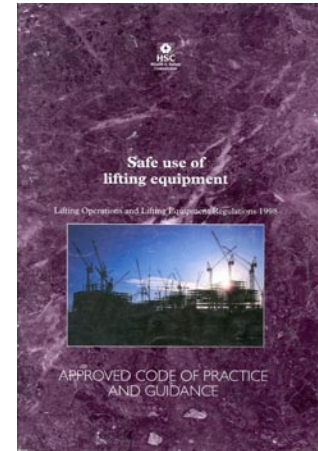
Hazard	Typical causal factors	Examples of control measures
Uneven ground, steps, trenches etc.	Manoeuvring and setting up the MEWP on uneven ground, steps, open trenches and objects on the ground can cause substantial platform movements at height that may trap people against overhead obstructions that are close to the platform	Provide and maintain ground in a condition suitable for the MEWP to operate on  Do not raise the platform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- on soft ground,</li> <li>- adjacent to steps</li> <li>- over voids or service ducts</li> </ul> and use spreaders as necessary
Leaning over or against the control panel while operating the MEWP	Leaning over the platform guardrails or control panel to view the MEWP base, wheels or tracks while manoeuvring distracts the operator's view of adjacent obstructions and can encourage the operator to squeeze past overhead objects	Leaning over guard rails to view the MEWP base, wheels or tracks while manoeuvring the MEWP and not looking for adjacent obstructions or squeezing past overhead objects are bad practices that should be prohibited.
Losing control of the platform controls	Trapping of the operator against the platform controls while the MEWP is travelling prevents the operator from controlling MEWP movements and increases the likelihood of serious injury in a trapping incident	Do not lean over the platform controls while moving. Avoid distractions, e.g. use of mobile phone, while travelling or moving the platform.  Don't put objects on the platform control panel that could move and activate the controls.  Do not place materials on the guard rails that could move and distract the operator.
Operating a boom type MEWP which is slewed at nominally 90 degrees to the MEWP forward and reverse travel directions	Operator can suffer disorientation with respect to the expected direction of movement of the MEWP when operating the platform travel controls	Always check the direction of movement of the MEWP with reference to the direction arrows on the MEWP base and platform controls before activating the control.
Poor/inadequate lighting	Lighting that makes objects adjacent to the platform that are positioned adjacent to and above the top of the platform guard rails difficult to see	Provide adequate background and task lighting where necessary, taking into account weather, time of day, seasonal changes and the work environment. Additional lighting needs careful design.
Pedestrians or other vehicles at ground level	Operator having to lean over the guard rails to view pedestrians or other vehicles at ground level when moving the MEWP	Cordon off the work area to prevent collisions and keep pedestrians at a safe distance

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Typical causal factors</b>	<b>Examples of control measures</b>
Objects on the ground in the area that the MEWP needs to manoeuvre	Leaning over the guard rails to view objects on the ground distracts the operator from watching out for overhead obstructions while the platform is being raised or the MEWP position manoeuvred	Before using the MEWP remove obstacles, as necessary, from the area in which you will manoeuvre
Operator error when using the MEWP platform controls	Mistakes, rushing to get the job done and lack of concentration of MEWP operator, distractions caused by others or work that the MEWP operator has to carry out	Take your time and don't be rushed unnecessarily

## Annex 3: Important factors in planning

**Note that this section assumes that risk assessment has identified that work at height cannot be avoided and that a MEWP is the most suitable way of doing it.**

1. Identify the range of work which is to be done from MEWPs and the means by which they will reach the work position. Plan to remove hazards as far as possible to limit reliance on methods of work and operator actions to control risk. In other words design out hazards as far as possible.
2. Consider for all activities what the potential might be for operators becoming trapped against objects. You will need to consider carefully the presence of objects against which someone could become trapped at all stages of the work. For example, working in a roof space with many existing obstructions (structural supports/services etc) may present a high possibility of an operator becoming trapped. **Annexes 1 and 2** provide guidance on trapping potential when moving across site, and then up and into the work position.
3. Select equipment to minimise the chances of trapping occurring. In particular consider any relevant dimensional constraints to, from and at the work position and choose equipment appropriately – not too small or too big and with the most appropriate manoeuvring characteristics (scissor/telescoping/articulated). The aim should be to select a machine in which it is as difficult as possible for the operator to get himself trapped.
4. Consider the layout and characteristics of the machine control panel and the potential for the operator to be trapped against the controls in the specific work situation for which it has been selected. The aim should be to select a machine in which it is as difficult as possible for the operator to get himself trapped. See **Annex 4** for more detailed advice.
5. Consider what tools and materials will be needed and plan how they will be carried/stored on/within the MEWP.
6. Ensure the ground is properly prepared and maintained on routes to and at working positions
7. Liaise with all relevant parties as part of your planning including others on site who will be affected by or will themselves affect MEWP activities.
8. Identify and specify the levels of competence/qualification which will be required of those doing the work.
9. Make detailed rescue/emergency plans.



## Annex 4: Important Factors when Selecting a MEWP



**NOTE: Selection of the MEWP must be done by a competent person - see section 3.3 above**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>MEWP characteristic</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Use on rough terrain or poor ground conditions	If the MEWP is to be used anywhere other than on prepared level surface or on a level and smooth floor, such as the concrete base or floors of the building under construction (that are strong enough to take the MEWP), then the MEWP should be a rough terrain type.	Non-rough terrain types should not be used on rough terrain.
Use outdoors or indoors (e.g. open walkways and loading areas) where wind or strong draughts could be present	If used in windy or draughty conditions, the MEWP should have and be marked with a specified maximum wind speed in which it can be used.	MEWPs intended only for use indoors are designed for zero wind conditions and should not be used outdoors or in strong draughts.
MEWP platform movement/boom flex should be minimised when the MEWP and its lifting structure are stationary.	The MEWP lifting structure should be sufficiently stiff to avoid excessive platform movements due to boom flexing that could cause trapping accidents while work is being carried out.	This can affect the decision on whether to use a vertical lift, telescopic boom or articulated boom MEWP and the amount of outreach required.
Avoidance of unsafe working practices while working in the work area	It is important to select MEWPs that have sufficient reach and flexibility of platform movements to allow all work positions to be accessed and allow the operators to carry out their necessary work tasks while standing on the platform floor.	The variety of platform positions in the work area that are achievable using vertical lift MEWPs and telescopic and articulated booms with and without extension platforms will affect the decision on the type of MEWP required for the work.

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>MEWP characteristic</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Separation distances from adjacent objects while accessing and working in the work area at height	Limited size platforms and pedestal, end or top mounted platforms can provide greater separation distances from adjacent objects while working in the work area at height	The physical size of the platform and nature of the mounting structure on some MEWPs can create obstacles to accessing and moving the platform in the work area at height
Separation distances from adjacent objects while raising the platform to access the work area at height	Boom MEWPs with fly jibs can decrease the risk of contacting objects while raising the platform to access the work area at height	Fly jibs allow a greater flexibility of platform positions when raising the platform to access the work area
Fine adjustments of platform position while working at height	Boom MEWPs with, for example, platform rotation features and scissor lifts with extension platforms can provide fine control when adjusting the position of the platform at height	Fine control can reduce the need to change the MEWP position or to use main boom movement controls while working at height
Self-levelling and over-run characteristics	MEWPs can have self-levelling features and different over-run characteristics	Familiarisation is essential for operators and rescuers to understand the operational characteristics of different MEWPs
Completely open control panels with exposed controls	Some MEWPs may have completely open control panels with exposed controls	Exposed controls do not provide protection against the operator being pushed over them.
Preventing platform movements if the operator is pushed over the platform controls	Some MEWPs have a trip device that is fully integrated into the platform and control panel structure, which cuts power if the operator is pushed over the controls.	Trip devices cut out powered platform movements as the operator is pushed over the controls
Protecting platform controls from being activated by objects placed on the platform control panel	Storage trays may be fitted in platforms that are either a part of the platform or control panel structure or supplied as accessories by the manufacturer.	Placing objects on the control panel is bad practice. Storage trays provide safe storage areas for tools and other small objects

## Annex 5: Emergency Descent Decal

Decals can be obtained free from [www.ipaf.org](http://www.ipaf.org).



## Annex 6: MEWP Categories

### Scissor



**IPAF**  
- Mobile Vertical (3a)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Scissor

### Vertical



**IPAF**  
- Static Vertical (1a)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Scissor

(NOTE : MEWP travels under power)

### Telescopic Boom



**IPAF**  
- Mobile boom (3b)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Boom

### Articulated Boom



**IPAF**  
- Mobile boom (3b)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Boom

### Lorry mounted boom



**IPAF**  
- Static boom (1b)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Boom

### Van mounted boom



**IPAF**  
- Static Boom (1b)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Boom

### Pedestrian controlled tracked boom



**IPAF**  
- Static boom (1b)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Boom

### Trailer mounted boom



**IPAF**  
- Static Vertical (1b)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Boom

### Push around vertical



**IPAF**  
- Static Vertical (PAV)  
**ConstructionSkills**  
- Scissor

(NOTE : MEWP is pedestrian powered while travelling)

## Annex 7: Emergency Procedures

### ***Incapacitated operator***

If an operator is trapped and cannot be communicated with, the emergency services should be called immediately.

### ***Rescue procedure***

Emergency rescue should be attempted using the following sequence:-

- 1) If the operator cannot take control of the situation, e.g. because they are incapacitated, then people in the platform who are authorised by their employer and have been trained and familiarised as an operator may take control of the MEWP using the platform controls.
- 2) If the above is not possible then a person at ground level can lower the MEWP **provided** they have been:
  - familiarised with the use of the emergency lowering systems and ground controls on the MEWP,
  - instructed through appropriate emergency drills and in the procedures to follow under the emergency plan (Section 3), and
  - authorised to carry out rescue at ground level by their employer.

### ***Lowering the platform***

Scan the travel path of the platform and check for any obstruction that could prevent the platform from being lowered or that the platform could contact while it is being lowered. Take into account the position of any platform extension deck.

Ground controls may not have the same sensitivity and overrun characteristics as the platform controls. Use the controls that provide the best control of movements and take special care when the platform is close to any obstruction. Follow the sequence telescope, elevate/slew, drive so far as possible when using controls.

### ***Ground control key***

It is important to ensure that the keys remain in the base unit during normal operation. This is necessary because the ground controls normally provide a much quicker way of bringing the platform to ground level than using the emergency controls.

In situations where keeping the key in the base is not ideal, e.g. when working on or adjacent to public highways, additional control measures should be implemented. These may include the provision of a second key to be held by the designated person who is authorised to act in the event of an emergency.



## References

1. INDG163 Five steps to risk assessment - Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
  2. British Standard Code of Practice, BS 8460:2005 Safe Use of MEWPs
  3. European standard, EN 280:2009 + A2:2009 Mobile elevating work platforms – Design calculations – Stability criteria - Construction - Safety – Examinations and tests
  4. Information Sheet CIS 58, The Selection and Management of MEWPs - Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
  5. MEWPs for Managers Training Course - International Powered Access Federation (IPAF)
  6. Technical Guidance Note F1/08/07, Familiarisation - International Powered access Federation (IPAF)
  7. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, Statutory Instrument 1998 No. 2306
  8. Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008, Statutory Instrument 2008 No 1597
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# Strategic Forum for Construction Plant Safety Group

## Best Practice Guidance for MEWPs - Avoiding Trapping / Crushing Injuries to People in the Platform



### Part 2: Guidance for Trained Operators and Rescuers

#### How to use this guidance

This is the second part of guidance produced by the Strategic Forum for Construction Plant Safety Group. **Part 1** is aimed at planners, managers, and trainers. It provides information on hazards, risk assessment, controls and responsibilities. The annexes to Part 1 provide detailed information which can assist in the identification of trapping risks and in the planning and managing of work activities to protect against entrapment accidents.

**Part 2** is aimed at those using MEWPs and those responsible for rescuing anyone trapped on a MEWP platform. Part 2 has been designed to be used in briefings or toolbox talks.

Note that this document is not intended to be complete guidance on all aspects of MEWP operation.

Operators of MEWP must at all times be trained and competent.

## The Trapping/Crushing Risk

MEWPs are acknowledged to be the safest and most efficient means of providing temporary access at height for many work activities.

In some work situations, however, MEWP operators, particularly of boom-type MEWPs, have been trapped/crushed between the MEWP platform/basket and an overhead obstruction. This has resulted in a significant number of serious accidents, including several deaths, in the UK in recent years. In some of these accidents, the operator's body was trapped/crushed over the control panel, trapping the controls in the "on position" and making the crushing worse.

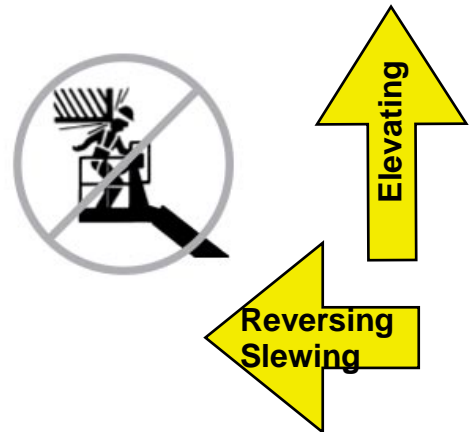
This Best Practice Guidance has been produced by the Strategic Forum for Construction Plant Safety Group, to raise awareness of this risk among MEWP **operators, supervisors and rescuers**. For more detailed information please refer to the **Part 1** of this document.



### What causes the risk?

Common reasons for accidents include any of the following while operating a MEWP close to an overhead obstruction:

- **Reversing, Slewing or Elevating** into an obstruction
- **Unexpected movement of the boom** near to an obstruction



### What factors increase the risk?

The factors listed below may **increase** risk when operating a MEWP close to an overhead obstruction. Guidance on ways to reduce these risks is given on page 29.

- Poor MEWP route planning
- Poor MEWP selection
- Insufficient MEWP familiarisation
- Uneven ground
- Poor visibility at height
- Distractions when operating MEWP
- Objects placed on the control panel
- High drive speeds, or lack of care...
- Overriding MEWP controls
- Using faulty or poorly maintained MEWPs

**Note: MEWPs should only be operated by trained operators**

## **Common Rescue Problems**

Once trapped, rescue can often be hampered because:

- No-one knows the person is trapped
- No emergency rescue plan
- No key in ground level controls:  
This limits the ability to use ground level controls in an emergency
- Lack of familiarity with ground / emergency descent controls:  
Ground operatives who have never practised using the ground/rescue controls, and cannot therefore safely bring the basket down in an emergency.
- Overload cell has been activated:  
This can affect the operation of the controls.
- Emergency stop has been activated:  
This can restrict the ability of the operator to be rescued.
- Complicated boom manoeuvre

**If someone is being crushed and can't breathe...**

**React Immediately!**

**you only have a few minutes to rescue and resuscitate them  
... every second counts!**

# 10 Ways to Reduce the Risk

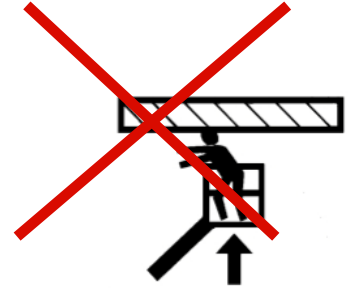
Working close to overhead structures should be regarded as a “higher risk” MEWP operation. If you are expected to carry out this sort of work, you should ensure that the following issues have been properly addressed, and that management has explained the steps taken to minimise trapping/crushing risks in a pre-start briefing.

***If in doubt, ask!***

## Plan the MEWP route carefully

### a) Keep a sensible distance from obstructions

The route taken by the MEWP should ideally be planned so as to keep a **sensible distance** between the MEWP and any overhead obstruction. This distance will need to be greater for a boom-type MEWP being driven at height to allow for the possible “bounce” and “see-saw” effects.

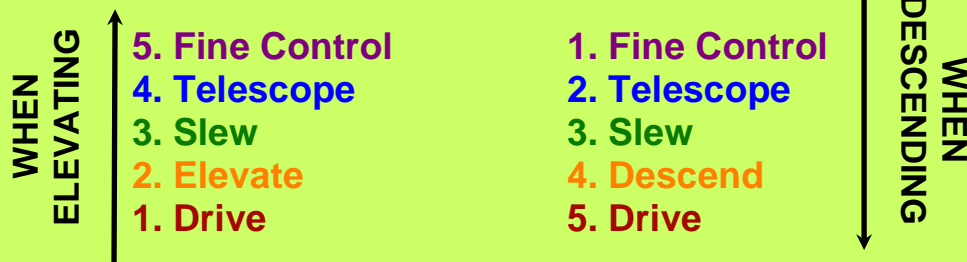


### b) Avoid the drive / elevate / slew controls when close to an obstruction

If working close to an overhead obstruction is unavoidable, it is strongly recommended that, where possible, only the fine-positioning controls of a boom-type MEWP should be used. Once the MEWP is close to the obstruction **the “coarser” drive, elevate and slew controls should be avoided.**

Movements should always be slow, deliberate and planned. This is achieved by careful use of the MEWP’s proportional controls.

The sequence of control use given below is recommended:



### c) Driving at height should be the last resort

**Driving a boom-type MEWP at height should be the manoeuvre of last resort when positioning the platform close to an overhead obstruction** since it can create unexpected movements that make fine adjustment of the platform position difficult to achieve..

If driving at height is considered the least risk option, booms should be driven at their **slowest speeds** (this is of particular relevance at lower heights, when drive speeds are faster).

## ☑ Select MEWP carefully

It is important to ensure the MEWP selected is **suitable for the specific manoeuvre to be carried out if working close to an overhead obstruction**.

Particular attention should be given to the choice of:

- **Reach** of machine - ideally, it is better not to operate close to the limit of the machine's "operating envelope"
- **Clearance** - ensure MEWP and platform are not too large for the spaces in which the machine must be operated

## ☑ Ensure familiarisation is specific

It is essential that appropriately trained operators receive a **familiarisation that is specific to the MEWP they plan to use**, conducted in a low-risk area away from overhead structures.

In addition to familiarity with the normal operating controls of the MEWP, the minimum standard for each operator is to fully understand:

- **Emergency Descent Controls** – how to use the emergency lowering controls, both under power and auxiliary modes including how the controls work *once the load cell has been activated*
- **"Dead Man" Controls (e.g. foot pedals)** – what happens if you remove your foot from the foot pedal and re-insert in a simulated "slumped over the controls" situation?
- **Operating Past the 90 Degree Position:** how do the controls work when a boom-type MEWP is slewed past the 90 degree position?

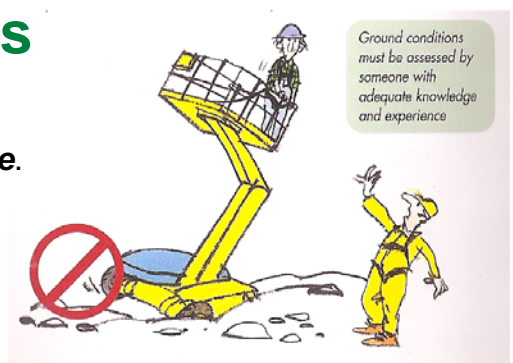
Personnel on the ground, who are competent to lower the MEWP in an emergency, should undergo familiarisation with the emergency and ground controls and **practice emergency lowering procedures** at regular intervals in accordance with the emergency rescue plan.

## ☑ Ensure good ground conditions

Ground conditions should be suitable for the safe operation of the machine. The ground should where possible be relatively level and compacted with **no obstructions in the operating zone**.

All trenches, column bases and pits should be identified and protected.

If ground conditions are poor, do not operate the MEWP.



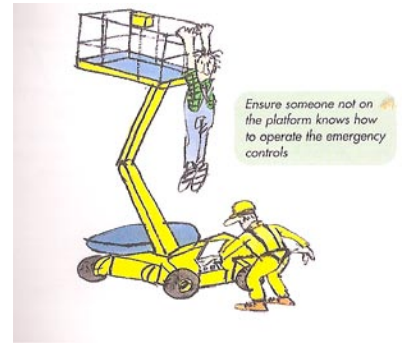
## ☑ Ensure good visibility at height

When working inside the building, and at times of low light (e.g. in winter months or in poor weather), **adequate lighting should be provided** or work suspended.

## ✓ Minimise distractions

**Distractions in the platform/basket**, such as mobile phones and trailing cables should be strongly discouraged. Loose materials on the MEWP handrails or in the basket of the MEWP should be prohibited and should be carried in approved containers and/or using approved materials handling attachments.

**Distractions on the ground** (people or objects near the MEWP base) should be removed before operating and exclusion zones complied with.



## ✓ Do not obstruct MEWP controls

**Basket controls:** basket/platform hand and foot controls should not be obstructed. Tools and materials which could obstruct the controls should not be placed on the MEWP control panel but stored in approved containers and and/or using approved materials handling attachments.

Once in position, consider isolating the power until you need to re-position to reduce the risks of accidental operation.

**Emergency lowering controls:** these controls could be required to effect an emergency rescue and should not be obstructed by objects on the ground (e.g. operating MEWP close to a wall with emergency controls facing the wall).

## ✓ Slow down, don't crouch over the controls and look!

- Slow drive speeds should be used, particularly when reversing
- Crouching over the controls significantly reduces the operator's margin of safety
- Scan the area for obstructions both before and during MEWP operation
- Do not lean over the guard rails while operating the MEWP

## ✓ Do not override the MEWP controls or use faulty MEWPs

- Check that MEWP has a valid thorough examination certificate
- Always perform daily checks
- Report all faults
- Any faults must be rectified before using MEWP
- Do not override the controls

## Rehearse rescue procedure

The following points should have been considered before using the MEWP. In extreme cases, and/or where an operation involves repeatedly working close to an obstruction, an observed “dry run” could be appropriate, to look for potential entrapment risks that could result in a rescue being required.

- **Ensure ground key available:**

The ground key for the MEWP should ideally be left in the base unit where this is practicable, or at least quickly available at ground level if not.

- **Appoint a ground rescue person:**

While the MEWP manoeuvre is taking place at least one (and as many as is appropriate) designated ground rescue person should be appointed who knows the rescue procedure and has been familiarised with the MEWP being used (including emergency rescue controls). They should always be readily available in the event of an emergency.

- **Consider how to raise the alarm:**

A system must be in place to identify that an operator may have become trapped, particularly for lone workers working close to an overhead structure. This needs very careful consideration if the operator cannot be seen from the ground. Operators must take advice if such a system has not been put in place when a risk of entrapment is present.

- **Decide who should effect the rescue and how:**

This depends on the complexity of the operation and therefore the relative risk of effecting a rescue from the ground compared to the risk of an operator, possibly in a state of panic, trying to rescue himself. It also depends on how the controls for the specific MEWP being used function if the load cell has been activated.

*The order of priority should be:*

**1. Operator:** the operator, or other competent people in the basket, should try to rescue themselves by re-tracing the steps they took in reverse order.

**2. Ground staff:** if visibility and understanding of situation from the ground are good, ground staff should effect a rescue using the ground controls in the following order:

- **auxiliary power** at first which gives the slowest and most controlled manoeuvre of the boom until it is obvious that the basket is clear of any obstructions at height.
- **powered descent:** once clear of obstructions, it is then recommended to switch to powered descent to maximize the speed of recovery.

**3. Another MEWP:** In some situations the use of another MEWP to gain access to the platform may be the safest option. This will only be acceptable if such rescue has been planned and includes means of transferring between platforms which prevents anyone falling.

### **Further Guidance:**

For more details about preventing trapping accidents please refer to **Part 1** of this Best Practice Guidance document.



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