



AVOID OVERHEAD OBSTRUCTIONS TOOLBOX TALK

WHY AM I AT RISK FROM OVERHEAD OBSTRUCTIONS WHEN USING A MEWP?

Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) can be used in confined areas, or near overhead structures.

When travelling or when elevated there is a risk that the operator or the platform occupant may come in contact with an overhead obstruction. This could result in crushing or entrapment of that person.

Entrapment may be caused by:

- Lack of awareness of the proximity of obstructions while operating the MEWP (overhead beam, etc).
- Selecting the wrong control or moving the MEWP in the wrong direction when close to overhead obstructions.
- Operating the MEWP erratically when close to overhead obstructions.
- Not providing enough stopping distance when operating close to the overhead obstructions.
- Sudden movements of the boom (boom bounce) caused when travelling into a curb or ditch, or when released after being snagged. The elastic movement of the boom can result in sudden motion of the platform (catapult effect).

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

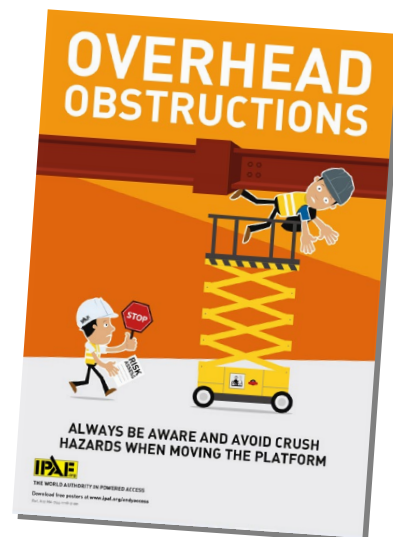
This toolbox talk applies to:

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

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Make a comprehensive risk analysis:

- Identify potential overhead obstructions;
- Identify the work tasks at height;
- Determine if secondary guarding is required;
- Verify that a rescue plan is valid and active;
- Check that the MEWP operator is trained and familiarized;
- Use the correct sequence of motion;
- Operate the controls slowly and deliberately;
- Use a grounds person (banksman) to supervise MEWP movement when in confined areas.



USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF MEWP Operator's Safety Guide
- Andy Access Poster (available at www.ipaf.org/andyaccess)
- Guidance on Secondary Guarding (available at www.ipaf.org/resources)
- MEWP Rescue Plan Toolbox Talk (available at www.ipaf.org/resources)
- Manufacturer's Operating Manual