



PREVENT OBJECTS FALLING FROM THE PLATFORM TOOLBOX TALK

WHEN IS THERE A RISK OF FALLING OBJECTS?

When working in a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) at height, you must be aware of the risk of tools, materials and equipment falling from the platform with the potential to injure people working at ground level. It is essential that any items likely to fall are properly secured within the envelope of the platform's guardrails.

WHAT IS THE RISK?

- Impact from falling objects on to anyone below or in the immediate vicinity of the MEWP – this includes other workers and the general public.
- Damage to property and the environment.
- Some objects may not fall directly to the ground, this could be as a result of being blown or deflected by impact with structures below. This means the potential drop zone could be spread across a wider area.

WHAT FACTORS NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION?

- Keep a tidy work area/platform.
- How close the platform is positioned to the work area.
- Selection of the appropriate MEWP to reduce the requirement for occupants to overreach.
- Use of manufacturer-approved devices and attachments to properly secure tools and materials to prevent them dropping.

HOW CAN I PREVENT OBJECTS BEING DROPPED FROM THE PLATFORM?

Plan thoroughly – machine selection is critical. Where possible, conduct a professional site assessment/survey to ensure you are using the correct machine for the job.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This Toolbox Talk applies to all individuals involved with the operation of MEWPs.

- User
- Owners
- Managers and Supervisors
- MEWP Operators and personnel

Always observe the jobsite risk assessment and associated requirements, control measures could include:

- Position the MEWP as close as possible to maximise access for the task at hand. Reposition the MEWP if necessary rather than overreaching.
- Avoid or reduce the amount of equipment, tools and materials in the platform.
- Ensure any items not currently being used should be correctly stored within the platform at all times.
- Use approved tool lanyards or tethers to connect tools to the platform or personnel.
- Secure materials inside the platform to prevent them moving whilst the equipment is in use.
- Only use manufacturer-approved material-handling devices. Using non-approved devices may increase other risks.
- Consider the use of manufacturer-approved platform material fall protection solutions such as debris netting to reduce the gaps in the guardrails (**CAUTION:** These may increase the potential for wind loading on the platform and reduce the effective operational wind speed of the MEWP. **ALWAYS** refer to the MEWP manufacturer for guidance).

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FALLING OBJECTS?

- Ensure the work area is adequately cordoned off with clear signage.
- Create an exclusion/drop zone of an appropriate size to prevent others being in a position where objects could fall on them.
- Use PPE as per the site risk assessment.

USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF Operators Safety Guide (available on the ePAL app www.ipaf.org/ePAL)
- Safe Use of MEWPs in Public Areas (available at www.ipaf.org/resources)
- Andy Access poster (available at www.ipaf.org/andyaccess)