

'WALKING THE MEWP' TOOLBOX TALK

WHAT IS 'WALKING THE MEWP'?

'Walking the MEWP' is the term used when manoeuvring or travelling a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) using the platform controls from the ground by walking alongside or near the MEWP. This includes those that use an 'umbilical cord', radio/remote control or fixed point of control at the chassis.

WHEN MIGHT I 'WALK A MEWP'?

'Walking the MEWP' is a procedure used where there is insufficient/restricted space above the platform to operate safely from the platform; such as through doorways, corridors or when the guardrails have been folded or removed. Some tracked MEWPs forbid travelling in the MEWP platform. This will be clearly identified in the operating manual.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE RISKS TO CONSIDER WHEN WALKING A MEWP?

Risks include

- Running over the operator's own foot (this type of incident occurs frequently when 'Walking the MEWP');
- Crushing the operator between the MEWP and an external structure (e.g. doorframe);
- Collision with people on the ground;
- Collision with structures owing to poor visibility;
- Overturning the MEWP.

NOTE: There are specific risks when 'Walking a MEWP' while loading and unloading MEWPs from vehicles. See IPAF's Load and Unload guidance.

USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF MEWP Operator's Safety Guide
- IPAF Load and Unload guidance
- IPAF Technical Guidance: Familiarisation
- IPAF Ground Conditions Toolbox Talk
- IPAF Guidance on the Assessment of Ground Conditions (all IPAF documents available at www.ipaf.org/resources)
- Manufacturer's Operating Manual

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This toolbox talk applies to all individuals involved with moving MEWPs on a site:

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

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- The operator should be trained for the MEWP category and familiarised with the MEWP being moved;
- Maximize stand-off distance;
- Walk the route before moving MEWP;
- Remove any obstacles and debris from the route;
- Cordon off the area;
- Do NOT get distracted (e.g. by a mobile phone);
- If visibility is obstructed, use someone to help guide the machine;
- Stand to the side when directing movement;
- Verify that the ground conditions can support the MEWP;
- Check the orientation of the machine and the controller match;
- On tracked MEWPs never stand in the potential travel path of the tracks;
- Remove any trip points;
- Avoid slippery surfaces;
- Allow for ramping when starting/stopping the MEWP.

