

MEWPs – Segregation / key items

EHS Alert No. 35

A recent incident on a Chalcroft project that resulted in a RIDDOR reportable injury has highlighted the **mandatory requirement that areas where MEWPS are operating are to be demarcated to indicate the movement and overhead work locations** of these machines. Site personnel must *not* be allowed to work under, within or walk through a potential drop zone area of operating MEWPS.

The type of demarcation can be from simple traffic cones or stakes with red and white tape or orange barrier fencing to more robust demarcation using pedestrian barriers or heras fencing - all with warning signage. The key is to ensure that site personnel can clearly see that this is an area that they cannot cross into unless they are directly associated with the works and that the hazard areas are clearly defined.

In addition to ensuring the working area is demarcated there are also a number of key items that must be considered when working with MEWPS on site:

- Loading and unloading areas must be clear of personnel, reversing MEWPS must be guided, adequate lighting must be in place and the area clear of other vehicles
- Overhead services must be isolated or controls in place to prevent access near or risk of contact
- MEWPS must not operate on or near manholes, chambers or drains and kept clear of all uncompacted backfill and excavations which must be adequately fenced
- The operating area of the MEWP must be firm and level and the ground bearing capacity known where they are working at height
- If outriggers are being utilised the RAMS must state whether spreader plates are to be used and what type they are
- If the MEWP is to be used on ground floor slabs or slabs at other levels the risk of the MEWP running off the edge onto soft ground or off the edge of an elevated floor slab must be controlled
- The type of MEWP selected must be suitable for the required task and the SWL must be known and not exceeded
- Cherry pickers should avoid being used to lift materials due to the small size and confined space of the basket and the bounce that occurs during their operation. If materials are being carried the RAMS must detail what they are and how they are being controlled to prevent interference with the controls, control of overhang and contact with nearby structures/equipment and how the materials are being secured. Scissor lifts are better designed for lifting materials but must also meet the same criteria detailed in RAMS
- MEWPs should not be utilised for access/egress to and from a structure where personnel have to leave the machine. If this is being considered site management are required to discuss this with a member of the EHS Department *before* approving RAMS and therefore allowing work to proceed
- All personnel in a cherry picker must wear a tightly secured harness with lanyards connected to the designated fixing point at all times including during low level movements. All site harnesses and accessories utilised must have their valid inspection documentation reviewed and recorded in the live site files prior to use.

MEWPs - Anti-entrapment / secondary guarding

The use of MEWPs can save time, make work at height more efficient, effective and safer than using other traditional methods of access and current HSE data clearly shows that, when used safely, MEWPs significantly reduce the risk of injuries attributed to work at height.

However there have been a number of fatal injuries that have occurred within the construction industry from persons being crushed while driving, accessing their work area or while working at height near obstructions.

Guidance documents have been produced since 2010 from the HSE, IPAF and the Construction Plant Safety Group focusing on preventative measures to avoid trapping or crushing to people in MEWPs and adherence to this guidance is required by Chalcroft. Therefore;

It is a **mandatory requirement that all boom type MEWPs (cherry pickers) hired by or working on Chalcroft sites are to be fitted with a suitable form of secondary guarding** in addition to the primary guarding ie foot pedal, shrouds and sunken controls.

There are two main types of secondary guarding: Physical barriers and pressure sensing devices - the type selected should be outlined within the specific RAMS based on the work activity and operating environment.

Examples of secondary guarding:



Physical barrier – Fixed full cage structure



Physical barrier – Operator protective structure



Physical barrier – Side protection barriers



Pressure sensing device – when activated ceases further movement and activates alarm



Pressure sensing device – breakaway bar when activated ceases further movement and activates alarm



Pressure sensing device – bar when activated ceases further movement and activates alarm

If you are responsible for arranging or managing works involving cherry pickers ie placing orders, reviewing RAMS and supervising or monitoring works – please ensure the requirement for secondary guarding shall be met and is complied to.

For any further information on these or any other EHS matters please do not hesitate to contact a member of the EHS Department. Thanks