

Safety Alert

Elevated Work Platforms

Issue Date: 26 March 2018

Context:

Elevated Work Platforms (EWPs) are a variety of platforms that provide safe options for working at height. They include scissor lifts, cherry pickers, boom lifts, travel towers and can be either petrol driven or battery powered. In recent years, there have been a number of incidents where workers have been crushed against structures while manoeuvring EWPs in an around fixed structures, or thrown from an EWP basket while traveling on uneven or unstable ground.

The 2017 OHS Regulations consider EWPs to be a type of passive fall prevention system and calls for significant risk control surrounding their use. An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate any risk associated with a fall at the workplace which includes all hazards associated with works involving EWPs.

Hazards:

- EWP operator not trained or competent
- Working too close to overhead structures which could lead to crushing incidents
- Working too close to electrical infrastructure which could lead to an electrical incident
- Travelling on uneven ground, steps, curbs and/or potholes
- Travelling over manhole covers or other covers that may collapse due to weight of EWP
- Using the EWP on unstable, soft or slippery terrain
- Using the EWP in unsuitable environmental conditions such as wind, rain or poor visibility
- Incorrect fall arrest or not wearing/incorrectly wearing fall protection when working at heights involving an EWP
- Quick or sharp movements when raising or moving plant which could throw workers out of the EWP basket
- Using an EWP beyond its safe working load limit
- Failure to secure materials, cylinders or tools which could fall from the elevated platform which and strike persons below
- Persons walking in the drop zone of EWP, where tools and materials could land
- Poor ventilation where petrol driven plant is operated



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Action Required:

The following principles must be followed when using EWPs:

- All operators must be trained and competent to operate the EWP
- For EWP's with booms greater than 11m, operators must hold a valid high risk license
- The EWP Operator's manual must be read and understood before use - this will detail key points such as safe working load limit and suitable terrains
- Always conduct a pre-start check before operating an EWP
- A site and task specific SWMS is required for all EWP tasks
- Under no circumstances is an EWP to be traversed under a low height obstruction with a worker in the EWP basket
- In those low height obstruction areas,
 1. Workers must exit the EWP
 2. Operate it remotely through the low height obstruction area
 3. Once clear of the obstruction re-enter the EWP
- A harness must be worn at all times in boom-type EWPs
- Appropriate emergency procedures are required - emergency descent switches should be identified and tested prior to operation
- Never enter or leave the platform when it is elevated
- Do not stand on the handrails of the platform
- EWPs must not be used as a crane or hoist
- Materials must not be slung or attached to the side of an EWP, unless the attachment has been specifically designed, rated, tested, marked and approved by the manufacturer of the EWP
- Care must be taken when working near power lines
- EWPs must not operate within 3 metres of power lines unless Energy Safe Victoria No Go Zone safety provisions have been complied with – this includes Permits to Work and Spotters
- The travel path of an EWP must be inspected for hazards prior to the EWP moving

RMIT Working Environment:

EWP operators must be aware of the following when operating an EWP at RMIT and the SWMS must address these risks accordingly:

- Staff and student activity around the plant operating
- Drop zone barricading to prevent access of staff and students within the drop zone
- Unauthorised access to EWP work area
- Impacts on nearby RMIT operations – academic and non-academic
- Overhead structures
- Travel path hazards e.g. uneven surfaces, collapse risks
- EWP emergency procedures
- Nearby electrical infrastructure, or other live mechanical or hydraulic services

Further Information:

- 2017 Victorian OHS Regulations, Part 3.3 (Prevention of Falls)
- [Energy Safe Victoria - No go zones and working around powerlines](#)
- [WorkSafe Victoria Compliance Code – Prevent of Falls, 2017](#)
- AS 2550.10 Cranes, Hoists, Winches- Safe Use-Mobile Elevating Work Platforms Portable Ladders
- Operators manual supplied by the EWP manufacturer