

Exiting the work platform at height

(Extract from BS8460 British Standard, Code of Practice, Safe use of MEWPs)

MEWPs are specifically designed to lift people to a position where they can carry out work from the work platform and then return to the starting level. They are not intended for the transfer of people from one level to another or leaving the work platform at height.

Exiting the platform at height may only be undertaken where a rigorous risk assessment carried out as part of planning the job indicates that this is the safest and most effective means of accessing a particular location taking into account the availability on site of other more suitable access equipment and the practicability of providing the same within the required timescales for the task to be carried out. The risk assessment should take into account the following factors:

- a) falling of persons during transfer from the work platform to the structure;
- b) falling of tools and materials during transfer from the work platform to the structure;
- c) sudden movement of the MEWP or work platform;
- d) additional loads imposed on the MEWP for which it was not designed which could affect stability or overload the machine;
- e) dynamic and impact loads from personal fall protection equipment;
- f) damage to the MEWP or structure by an unintentional movement of the MEWP;
- g) stranding of people at height;
- h) use of extending decks and gates, use of double lanyards, etc.;
- i) maintenance/replacement of fall protection measures for persons whilst they are on the structure.

Once the risks have been assessed, measures should be devised to reduce these risks to an acceptable level and a method formulated so that a safe system of work can be put in place. This safe system of work should include supervision by the responsible body so that the method is adhered to by personnel at the worksite.

NOTE Further information is given in HSE leaflet INDG 163 [19].

If for any reason it is not possible to introduce adequate measures to reduce the overall risk of the proposed operation to an acceptable level then the operation should not be carried out.

The British Standard on “*Safe use of MEWPs – Code of practice*” gives further recommendations for safe systems of work for leaving the work platform at height (see BS 8460:2005 Annex B).