



# MEWP GROUND CONDITIONS TOOLBOX TALK

## WHY ARE GROUND CONDITIONS SO IMPORTANT?

Ground conditions are critical for the stability of the mobile elevating work platform (MEWP). Unsuitable ground conditions can result in the MEWP overturning with potential loss of life.

### Examples of what to look out for

- Sloping or uneven surfaces;
- Proximity to excavations, soft ground or un-compacted fill;
- Weather conditions (e.g. waterlogged or frozen soil);
- Underground services (e.g. manhole covers, drains);
- Paved areas, curbs and edgings;
- Suspended floors;
- Voids (e.g. cellars, basements, vaults).

## WHICH MEWPS ARE AFFECTED?

All MEWPs are affected by ground conditions.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- The weight of the MEWP (see manufacturer's data plate);
- The maximum point loads of the MEWP (marked on the MEWP);
- The load bearing capacity of the ground.

## WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This toolbox talk applies to:

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

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Conduct a risk assessment.
- Check the planned route and the work area.
- Check for underground services or cellars.
- Prevent access where the ground is unsafe.
  - Use suitable barriers that are visible from the platform and strong enough to prevent machine access or a ground person (banksman) to guide the operator.
- Use spreader pads and trackways if necessary ([www.ipaf.org/pads](http://www.ipaf.org/pads)).

## Practice question:

If you were to use a MEWP where you are standing, what would you need to do?



## USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF MEWP Operator's Safety Guide (section 6.6)
- Technical guidance document 'Guidance on the Assessment of Ground Conditions' (available at [www.ipaf.org/resources](http://www.ipaf.org/resources))
- Andy Access 'ground conditions' and 'setting up on a slope' posters (available at [www.ipaf.org/andyaccess](http://www.ipaf.org/andyaccess))
- IPAF spreader pad poster and leaflet (available at [www.ipaf.org/resources](http://www.ipaf.org/resources))
- IPAF Ground Pressure Calculator [www.ipaf.org/pads](http://www.ipaf.org/pads)
- SFPFG Ground Conditions for Construction Plant (available at [www.ipaf.org/resources](http://www.ipaf.org/resources))