



Promoting the safe
and effective use of
powered access



SPOTTER DUTIES & FUNCTION TOOLBOX TALK

WHAT IS A SPOTTER?

A spotter (also known as a ground observer) is someone who directs the movement of a MEWP on or around a site when considered necessary by a risk assessment.

WHEN MAY A SPOTTER BE NEEDED?

MEWPs (Mobile Elevating Work Platforms) can operate in many environments. In some situations, hazards may be identified that are difficult to be seen by the operator, such as blind spots and provide another set of eyes on activities in the work area, including moving traffic or pedestrians. In these cases, a spotter may be used but they must be competent and authorized.

WHAT SKILLS DOES A SPOTTER REQUIRE?

- Patience, focus on task and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations.
- The ability to work well with others.
- Be medically fit.
- Have good coordination.
- Have effective communication skills.
- Have knowledge of the site and potential hazards.
- Be familiar with the equipment being used.

WHAT ARE THE DUTIES OF A SPOTTER?

- Provide clear, agreed upon, and safe signals to the MEWP operator.
- Coordinate pedestrians and site traffic with MEWP operations.
- Direct the movement of machines and persons within MEWP operations.
- Understand the MEWP's capabilities and the MEWP danger areas (e.g., overhanging MEWP structures such as counterweight, extended platform and boom location, stopping distances).
- Be involved in the task and route planning of the MEWP.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This toolbox talk applies to all individuals involved when directing a MEWP on site:

- Spotter
- Trained Operator
- Site Manager
- MEWP Supervisor
- The User

WHAT SHOULD A SPOTTER DO?

- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Always stand in a safe place.
- Wear high visibility clothing.
- Be visible at all times to the MEWP operator, as required. When not possible, use personal radios or other means of communication.
- Provide clear communication to all personnel near the MEWP.
- Never position themselves between the MEWP and a fixed object or another machine.
- Follow the agreed route plan when moving the MEWP.

WHAT SHOULD THE OPERATOR DO?

- Agree to and understand the signals to be used by the spotter.
- Communicate with the spotter prior to movement.
- Follow the instruction given by the spotter unless it is unsafe to proceed. Follow the agreed route plan when moving the MEWP.
- Stop **ALL** MEWP movements if they cannot see or hear the spotter.

REMEMBER

- **Communicate**
- **Follow the plan**
- **Be visible**
- **Be vigilant**

**If there are any concerns, stop
the operations immediately**

USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF Operators Safety Guide
- Statement of Best Practices for Workplace Risk Assessment and Aerial Work Platform Equipment Selection. (Available at www.ipaf.org/resources)
- Use a Spotter Andy Access poster (available at www.ipaf.org/andyaccess)