



Promote and enable the safe, effective use of powered access worldwide

HOW TO STAY SAFE ON OR NEAR ROADWAYS

Although mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) remain one of the safest ways to access temporary work at height, IPAF's accident data shows increased reports from the USA of MEWPs being hit by vehicles. Setting up MEWPs correctly when working on or near roadways helps reduce incidents and accidents.

Data captured by IPAF is almost certainly an underrepresentation of actual incident rates in the USA. Many accidents and incidents are not reported, so the number is likely to be even greater.



Who has Jurisdiction in the USA?

If an employee suffers a major injury or fatality because of a road traffic accident (RTA) while operating a MEWP, e.g., the MEWP is hit by a passing vehicle, multiple investigations may take place. Local police and possibly the Department of Transportation (DOT) would typically investigate the incident as an RTA, while the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) would likely investigate from the workplace safety compliance perspective to determine whether any occupational safety standards were violated.

Current Planning Practices

USA contractors and MEWP users typically address highway or roadside work through a Job Safety Analysis (JSA) or a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA). These often incorporate traffic control measures in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which sets the standards for all traffic control devices in the USA, including traffic signs, road markings, and traffic signals.



Planning for Safe Work at Height on or Near Roadways

Inadequate planning, or a lack of planning altogether, increases the risk of accidents. Anyone who plans to work at height on or near roadways needs to be qualified to consider all eventualities.





The table shows key duty holders’ responsibilities and ways to reduce risk and work safely.

User (contractor/employer)	Supervisor	MEWP operator
Conducts a site visit to identify hazards and the required control measures.	Performs a site assessment to identify existing control measures are adequate. Carries out a pre-start briefing with MEWP operators and ground rescue personnel.	Conducts a site inspection before operating. If the operator feels the situation is unsafe, they should not commence work.
Ensures the most suitable type of MEWPs are selected and that MEWP operators are trained.	Ensures MEWPs have evidence of an annual inspection and that operators are trained and familiarized.	Carries out a pre-use inspection of the MEWP before use. If there are any issues – isolates, tags and reports the issue.
Prepares suitable and sufficient JSAs and JHAs.	Ensures control measures listed in the JHA/JSA are in place and followed.	Understands the control measures that have been identified in the JHA/JSA.
Ensures compliance with the MUTCD.	Ensures all MUTCD site requirements are in place and followed.	Follows MUTCD and notifies the supervisor of any additional control measures that are required.
Plans an effective exclusion zone to protect MEWPs from moving vehicles.	Ensures exclusion zone is effective and MEWP movement does not allow any part of the MEWP to extend beyond the exclusion zone.	Ensures all parts of the MEWP remain in the prescribed exclusion zone during operation. Is always aware of their surroundings and ensures ground/ auxiliary controls are always accessible.
Identifies the safest position for the MEWP when on site so it cannot be hit by passing vehicles.	Ensures access to and from the work area, including load/unload areas.	Follows the site plan for all movements of the MEWP on site.
Prepares a documented recovery and rescue plan. Ensures the plan is rehearsed.	Ensures the recovery and rescue plan is documented and understood by everyone, and that ground rescue personnel are familiarized with the ground controls and emergency/auxiliary lowering controls.	Ensures ground rescue personnel can demonstrate the safe use of the ground controls and emergency/auxiliary lowering controls.
Supplies suitable communication systems for the MEWP operator and ground rescue personnel.	Ensures communication systems with the ground rescue personnel are functioning.	Tests communication systems are functioning correctly with ground personnel in case of emergency.

Resources:

- IPAF Global Safety Report 2025: www.ipaf.org/gsr
- IPAF Street Smart Safety Campaign: www.ipaf.org/safe
- IPAF Resource Library: www.ipaf.org/resource-library
- www.osha.gov
- <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>

Accident data saves lives – always report accidents and near-misses to IPAF!

IPAF accident reporting is completely confidential. Reports can be submitted anonymously, and all information provided is fully anonymized – no personal or company details are shared.
www.ipafaccidentreporting.org



For more information about *How to Stay Safe on or Near Roadways* and other IPAF safety campaigns, visit: www.ipaf.org/safe

