



# THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY SYSTEMS FITTED TO MEWPS TOOLBOX TALK

To comply with regional safety requirements, Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) are fitted with various safety systems to prevent accidents, personal injuries and property damage.

Altering or disabling a MEWP safety system is a deliberate act that could cause the MEWP to operate outside of its designed safety limits.

This Toolbox Talk provides information on the types of safety systems fitted to MEWPs, and the consequences that could happen if they are interfered with.

## EXAMPLES OF SAFETY SYSTEMS

- Enabling systems, which may include Deadman switches and footswitches
- Secondary guarding systems
- Load sensing systems
- Emergency/auxiliary lowering systems
- Tilt protection systems
- Platform guardrail systems
- Stabilising/levelling interlocking systems
- Outreach limitation/working envelope systems
- Other systems that introduce limit switches and interlocks e.g., elevated drive speed
- Intelligent anchorage points
- Access control telematics

## WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF A SAFETY SYSTEM IS INTERFERED WITH?

MEWPs should be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Interfering with a MEWP's safety system can potentially result in:

- Major injuries or fatalities to platform occupants, site personnel, and members of the public
- Crushing or entrapment of platform occupants
- Falls from the platform
- A MEWP overturning (or partially overturning)
- Catastrophic failure of load-bearing components
- Damage to equipment, buildings and the environment

## WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This Toolbox Talk applies to all individuals involved with the safe operation of a MEWP, including:

- The MEWP operator
- User (the person who has control of the MEWP on site)
- Managers, supervisors and demonstrators
- Nominated ground control rescue personnel

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF INTERFERING WITH SAFETY SYSTEMS?

Interfering with a MEWP's safety system puts lives at risk – not just the operator or technician who has done the interfering, but all users of the MEWP, until the interference is detected and removed.

Employees have a duty of care to themselves and those around them. Many countries have legislation for the safe use of MEWPs. Legal action may be taken if interference has occurred and not been detected through the safe systems of work.

## WHAT SHOULD USERS/PERSONS IN CONTROL OF THE SITE DO?

- Ensure the MEWP is supplied in a safe condition and has evidence of an in-date inspection/thorough examination.
- Ensure operators are trained and familiarised with the specific model of MEWP.
- Ensure operator pre-use inspections are carried out.
- Supervisors should monitor the safe condition and use of the MEWP while on site.
- Report dangerous acts and defects to regulators.

## WHAT SHOULD MEWP OPERATORS DO?

- Always carry out a pre-use inspection prior to use and document the inspection. IPAF recommends using the ePAL app.
- Never interfere with, or override, any safety systems or their equipment.
- If any faults are identified, or if any safety systems have been overridden, the MEWP must not be used. You should ISOLATE, TAG and REPORT the issue to your supervisor.

## USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF Operators Safety Guide
- Manufacturer Operators Manual (available via [www.ipaf.org/manufacturers](http://www.ipaf.org/manufacturers))