



SPOTTER DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES TOOLBOX TALK

A spotter is someone trained to assist a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) operator by providing guidance and warnings about potential hazards during manoeuvring and operation.

The spotter's role includes:

- Observing and maintaining visual awareness of the MEWP, the MEWP operator, and surroundings.
- Communicating with the MEWP operator.
- Potentially initiating emergency procedures.

WHEN MAY A SPOTTER BE NEEDED?

Spotters are crucial for safe operation in situations where the operator's visibility is limited or when hazards are present, including:

- Moving traffic
- Certain ground and floor conditions
- Other people in the vicinity
- Power lines (overhead and underground)
- Areas with entrapment or crushing risks

WHAT QUALITIES DOES A MEWP SPOTTER REQUIRE?

- Patience, and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations.
- Ability to prioritise tasks and maintain continuous focus on equipment and surrounding hazards.
- The ability to work well with others, be medically fit and have good coordination and keen observational skills.
- Effective communication skills, knowledge of the site and familiarity with the equipment being used and its capabilities.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SPOTTER

- Be familiar with the MEWP. This includes the location and function of the ground and emergency or auxiliary lowering controls.
- Communicate effectively. This may be verbal, or by radio, or visually using hand signals.
- Provide clear directions to the MEWP operator during travel from one point to another and during movements where visibility is restricted.
- Check for potential hazards before any MEWP operations. This includes:
 - Other trades (personnel/public) in the area

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This Toolbox Talk applies to all individuals involved in assisting a MEWP operator on site:

- Spotters and ground rescue persons
- MEWP operators
- Site managers and supervisors
- MEWP users (those in control of MEWP operations)

- Other equipment and vehicles
- Overhead, ground level, and underground hazards
- Inadequate exclusion zones
- Control the work area where the MEWP is operating. This includes co-ordinating pedestrian and traffic movements and checking ground/floor conditions.
- Ensure the key is always in the ground controls and the emergency lowering/auxiliary controls are always accessible.
- Be prepared to raise the alarm and conduct emergency procedures, if necessary.

THE SPOTTER SHOULD:

- Never position themselves under, or between, the MEWP and a fixed object or another machine.
- When safe to do so, attempt to stop **ALL** MEWP movements if they cannot see or hear the MEWP operator, by pushing in the emergency stop switch at the ground controls.
- Follow the agreed route when moving the MEWP.
- Always report potential hazards.
- Be aware of falling objects.
- Remain in the area until the MEWP operator has stopped work and lowered the platform to the stowed position.

THE MEWP OPERATOR SHOULD:

- Check for any potential hazards.
- Follow the route plan when moving the MEWP.
- Follow the instructions given by the spotter unless it is unsafe to proceed.
- Understand the signals used by the spotter.
- Communicate effectively with the spotter.
- Stop **ALL** MEWP movements if they cannot see or hear the spotter.

REMEMBER:

- Follow the route plan and always be vigilant.
- **ALWAYS** be visible to the MEWP operator.

USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF Operators Safety Guide
- IPAF MEWP Spotter training course
- Use a Spotter Andy Access poster (available at www.ipaf.org/andyaccess)