



THE SAFE USE OF CHARGING LEADS TOOLBOX TALK

Charging batteries on electrified Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) should be carried out in line with the manufacturer's instructions, which can be found in the operators' manual. Incorrect battery charging can increase the risk of fire or explosion from transformers and/or charging equipment.

WHAT IS THE RISK?

Fire or explosion can occur when recharging batteries on electrified MEWPs in several ways:

- Charging MEWP batteries at a reduced voltage through a transformer (e.g., 110 volts). If the transformer rating is too small, it can cause excessive heat buildup.
- Coiled leads can generate heat that creates a fire risk.
- If transformers are left on too long and their auto cut-off switches are defective, they may overheat.
- Charging multiple MEWPs at the same time using one transformer that is not rated for the task can lead to overheating.
- If trailing leads are crushed or damaged by other plant or equipment while batteries are charging, it can cause a short circuit.
- Using incompatible equipment, e.g., after-market battery chargers that are not approved by the MEWP manufacturer.
- Damaged leads or connection plugs with bare wires can cause electrical short circuits.
- Charging leads that are too long can create a voltage drop, which may lead to reduced voltage levels at the connected devices, affecting their performance and potentially causing damage.
- Charging leads that are immersed in liquid with bare wires creates a risk of electric shock or electrocution.
- Failing to disconnect the charging lead before manoeuvring the MEWP can damage the wiring, potentially causing a short circuit if exposed wires touch an earth connection.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This Toolbox Talk applies to all individuals involved with charging the batteries on a MEWP on site or a workshop environment, including:

- Workshop managers, supervisors and service technicians/engineers
- Users
- Operators, site managers and supervisors

WHAT ARE THE RISK CONTROL MEASURES?

- Always refer to the MEWP manufacturer's instructions for the correct transformer rating and the maximum allowable length of the charging lead.
- Fully uncoil all charging leads and do not add extension leads.
- Before putting a MEWP on charge, inspect the charging lead for any damage. Damaged leads may be repairable in certain circumstances, otherwise they will need to be disposed of.
- Adopt good housekeeping by ensuring there are no trailing leads across a workshop or site that could create a trip hazard or be run over by other equipment. Where possible, elevate charging leads off the floor.
- Ensure the charging indicator light is on (if fitted) while the batteries are on charge.
- Always wear the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Always report any problems or defects.

REMEMBER!

**Never take unnecessary risks. If
equipment is damaged or
incompatible – DON'T USE IT!**

USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF Operators' Safety Guide
- Manufacturer Operators' Manual (available via www.ipaf.org/manufacturers)
- Be safe in the workshop Andy Access Poster (available via www.ipaf.org/andyaccess)