



THE SAFE USE OF A WINCH FOR (UN)LOADING MEWPS TOOLBOX TALK

Some Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) are (un)loaded on vehicles and trailers with the aid of a winch; this can be for several different reasons:

- Vehicles and trailers that exceed the gradeability of the specific MEWP.
- Inclement weather conditions.
- Adherence to company safe systems of work, as a result of a job specific risk assessment.

WHAT ARE THE HAZARDS AND RISKS?

- Incorrect use of the winch can lead to crushing injuries or fatalities. This can be caused by using the winch and operating the MEWP simultaneously, incorrect travel direction selected, or unintended movement of the winch control.
- A winch cable failing during operation.
- A damaged or defective winch, winch rope, or hook may not be able to safely aid in the (un)load process.
- Standing between MEWPs while using the winch.
- Winching MEWPs which are incorrectly aligned.
- Winching a narrow MEWP up/down a single ramp.
- Leaving an extended winch rope cable unsecured.

RISK CONTROL MEASURES (TRANSPORT AND DEPOT MANAGERS)

- A risk assessment should be in place for (un)loading activities. It should be developed by a competent person with adequate knowledge of transport operations and MEWPs to be (un)loaded.
- Ensure adequate lighting in (un)loading areas.
- Ensure that the winch, winch rope and all ancillary equipment are inspected and in a serviceable condition.

RISK CONTROL MEASURES (DELIVERY DRIVERS)

- The driver should always carry out a dynamic risk assessment prior to any (un)loading activity.
- Carry out a daily/pre-use check of the winch, winch rope, and hook to identify any damage/fault.

USEFUL REFERENCES

- IPAF Load and Unload Best Practice Guidance TE-1132-0516-1-en
- IPAF Delivery driver Toolbox Talk
- The Pedestrian Control of MEWPs Toolbox Talk TE-29-EN-V14.0 2023-09-06.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

This Toolbox Talk applies to all individuals involved with the delivery and collection of MEWPs, including:

- Rental company staff
- Users (those in control of MEWPs on site)
- Sub-contract delivery companies/drivers

- Ensure the rating of the winch, cable and hook is adequate to safely aid loading the specific MEWP.
- Follow the MEWP manufacturer's instructions for the correct position to attach the winch hook.
- When using a winch, carry out a straight pull using a twin chain system (brothers).
- Care should be taken when operating the MEWP and winch controls simultaneously.
- Additional risk assessment should be taken when (un)loading faulty or damaged equipment.
- Always keep a safe distance away from the MEWP while winching a MEWP into position.
- Never stand or place any part of your body between two MEWPs on a vehicle/trailer bed when MEWPs are being (un)loaded.
- If there is any doubt about the MEWPs brakes to safely hold the machine in position, the wheels must be chocked.
- Never overload the winch, cable or hook.
- Stop and think before you activate the directional control switch/button on the winch remote.
- Keep vehicle/trailer beds free from debris and unnecessary tie down equipment.
- During the (un)loading activity wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Keep unnecessary personnel away from the trailer during the (un)loading process.
- Use a Banksman/Spotter if required.
- Never use the winch to secure a MEWP for transportation.
- Care should be taken when operating the MEWP and winch controls simultaneously.

USER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide a safe (un)loading area for the delivery and collection of MEWPs with an adequate run-off area.