

SAFETY BULLETIN

Collisions of mobile elevated work platforms increase

BACKGROUND

There have been an increased number of reported collisions involving mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs). These incidents occur when the MEWP work basket hits fixed objects resulting in people being injured from impact, crushing or shearing and damage to the work basket.

Typically, baskets are more likely to hit fixed structures when they are placed in (or around) fixed structures with restricted access or are adjacent to a fixed object.

One of these incidents resulted in fatal injuries. See Investigation information release *IIR14-04 Fatality at Boggabri mine* at www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/miners-and-explorers/safety-and-health/incidents/incident-updates

MEWPs are used in construction installation and in maintenance activities. They save time and make working at heights efficient, effective and generally safer than using traditional methods of access.



INVESTIGATIONS

Investigations of reported incidents identified a number of causal factors. These included:

- inadequate identification of the risk of basket collision when assessing the task, the site environment and MEWP function limits
- human behaviour (MEWP operator and spotter)
- the MEWP being operated beyond its design limits such as wrong grades, which effects basket stability
- lack of operator supervision
- MEWP equipment failures such as basket controls
- poor procedures or inadequate safe work methods statements for the activities being carried out
- inadequate competency levels of operators and spotters.

SPECIFIC LEGISLATION

The *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* sets out mandatory requirements for the person with management or control of powered plant at the work place (including MEWPs). Among other things this includes:

- managing risks associated with the use of MEWPs colliding with any person or thing in accordance with part 3.1 'Managing risks to health and safety'. See clause 214(d).
- minimising risks to safety in accordance with the hierarchy of risk control measures, including minimising risks, so far as is reasonably practicable by implementing engineering control measures. See clause 36(3)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mine operators should review and revise risk control measures that prevent people in MEWPs from being injured as a result of a collision of the work platform basket with a fixed object.

In carrying out this review and to assist in legislative compliance, mine operators should:

1. Identify all work activities on the mine site where MEWPs are, or are likely to be used.
2. Where MEWPs are, or are likely to be used, for each activity determine –
 - a) if there is a potential risk of the work platform basket colliding with a fixed object
 - b) work activities where MEWP work platforms are required to work in a restricted area that requires multiple boom articulations and movements to enter that area.
3. Where a risk of crush injury to a person(s) in the work platform from an overhead fixed object is identified, use MEWPs with engineering control measures (that do not rely on human behaviour), so far as is reasonably practicable. This should include consideration to secondary guarding such as:
 - a) physical protection of the operator in the work basket, such as protective structures to assist in mitigating the occurrence of a crush injury
 - b) an automatic device(s) that assists in mitigating the severity of a crush injury.

Note: MEWPs without secondary guarding should not be used in restricted areas.

4. Provide adequate training, supervision and task observation of site practices.
5. For those restricted areas that require multiple boom articulations, implement a work permit system that includes carrying out a task-specific risk assessment, supervisor sign off and consultation with all people associated with the activity.

Note: Clause 9(2) of the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulation requires a PCBU at a mine to conduct a risk assessment by a person who is competent.
6. Consider *AS 2550.10: Cranes, hoists and winches - Safe use - Mobile elevating work platforms* when using MEWPs and use MEWPs that comply to *AS/NZS 1418.10: Cranes, hoists and winches - Mobile elevating work platforms*.
7. Consult with workers on site specific requirements for use of MEWPs.

FURTHER INFORMATION

1. MEWPs are design-registered and alterations that affect safety require independent verification and amendment to registration documents.
2. Further information on MEWPs and secondary guarding can be sourced from the EWP Association, refer www.ewpa.com.au/resources/information-sheets



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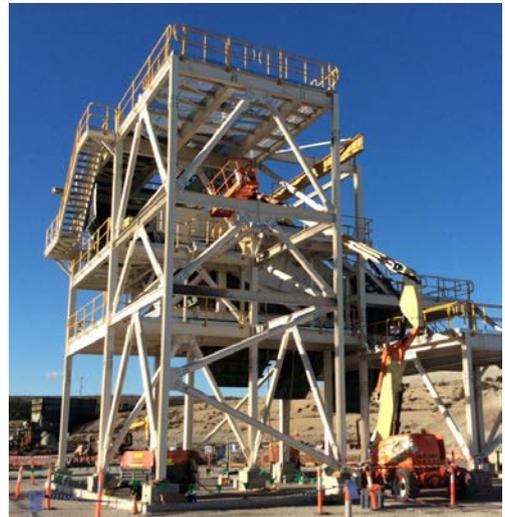
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NOTE: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this safety bulletin, and are informed of its content and recommendations. This safety bulletin should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine's information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine's notice board.

Signed

Bill Barraclough
ACTING DIRECTOR
MINE SAFETY OPERATIONS BRANCH
NSW TRADE & INVESTMENT

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