

# SAFETY GUIDANCE

**December 2024**

The Elevating Work Platform Association of New Zealand Inc. (EWPA) is the peak Industry Association representing Manufacturers, Importer/Distributors, Maintenance and or Inspection professionals, Rental fleet owners and end users of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWP's) in New Zealand.

## **SUBJECT: Safe Use of MEWPs Fitted with Deck Extensions**

The EWPA has recently become aware of a fatality overseas where an operator was ejected from a scissor lift MEWP after the extended, deck extension was caught on a protruding structure during a lowering movement of the MEWP.

In collaboration with the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF), the EWPA NZ provides the following safety information to alert Owners, PCBU's, Trainers and Operators to the potential hazard around the safe use of scissor deck extensions.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

Most Scissor Lift MEWP's available have a deck extension which provides more workspace, some are single sided, others are double sided extensions. Extending the deck out is a safe and effective way to get close to your work area without putting you or the machine in a dangerous position. Remember, we don't reach out from a MEWP and must stay inside the confines of the handrails. The deck extension allows you to get more work done with less MEWP movements.

The deck extension can bring about further hazards when using a MEWP, these include but are not limited to:

- **Overloading:** Exceeding the maximum load capacity can damage components and potentially lead to overturn.
- **Impact:** Extended decks increase the risk of collision with vehicles, equipment, buildings, personnel, and other obstacles, particularly during movement.
- **Obstructed View:** Extended decks can obscure the view beneath the platform, increasing the risk of striking unseen objects, structures or individuals.
- **Unsecured Deck:** Failure to secure locking devices/pins can cause the deck to slide unexpectedly while driving or stopping and transporting.
- **Debris Accumulation:** Debris beneath the deck can obstruct the slides and/or wheels, preventing smooth operation.
- **Control cable Damage:** Control box cables can be damaged when trapped between platform and extension deck guardrails during operation.

## **EWPA RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The EWPA recommends the following:

### **1. Owners Responsibilities:**

- Ensure that maintenance and inspections are being done at regular intervals as per the MEWP Best Practice Guideline, AS2550.10 and the OEM service manual, ensure it is recorded in the MEWP's Logbook.
- Information sharing – passing on of safety critical information to customers, employees and/or operators where possible, which includes this guidance.

## 2. Operator Responsibilities:

- As part of training and the requirements of the BPG, the pre-operational checklist on the front cover of the MEWP logbook, item 12: Platform & Handrails – no damage, handrails 100% secure, self-closing action of doors working. No grease or debris on the floor. Slide out deck(s) (as fitted) smooth operation, latches ok.
- A visual inspection is required on the extension deck by extending the deck on ground level before use.
- **ALWAYS LOOK IN THE DIRECTION YOU ARE TRAVELLING eg. if you are going up, look up**
- Any faults or defects should be reported immediately and the MEWP taken out of service until rectified.
- **Risk Assessment:** Hazards should be identified, risks evaluated, precautions decided, the plan recorded and implemented prior to undertaking the task
- **Load Management:** Never exceed the maximum safe working load specified on the extension deck decal and in the operator's manual.
- **Secure Positioning:** Ensure the deck is securely locked in both extended and retracted positions.
- **Deck Cleanliness:** Keep the main deck and extension deck clear of debris.
- **Controlled Movement:** Retract the deck before lowering or driving whenever possible. Never extend beyond the exclusion zone.
- **Situational Awareness:** Check all platform corners and the rear before lifting, lowering and driving, using a spotter if necessary. Ensure nothing is below or above that could hinder the MEWP.

## 3. Inspector/Technician Responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the extension deck(s) are inspected, including SWL as per the routine maintenance/inspection checklist, AS2550.10, WorkSafe BPG and manufacturers recommendations.

