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Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

## LET'S TALK SAFETY - NOVEMBER 2023

# CONQUERING HEIGHTS: MASTERING MEWP SAFETY PRACTICES FOR ELEVATED WORK PLATFORMS

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## Introduction

**Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPS)** MEWPs are designed to provide a safe work platform for temporary work at height. In relation to the fall protection hierarchy, they are work equipment that can prevent a fall and protects its operators whilst at the same time allowing safe access to difficult to reach spaces.

There are many different types of MEWP used within the regions with the most common types being: -

- vertical 'scissor' lift;
- self-propelled boom;
- vehicle-mounted boom, and;
- trailer-mounted boom.

The selection of the correct MEWP for the working application is critical. This article explores common issues and key practical requirements for organisations to consider.





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There are concerns about the lack of MEWP safety practices in the Middle East and we face many challenges. Addressing operator knowledge gaps, providing proper education, and overcoming language barriers are essential steps to ensure safety in such operations. Safety training and clear communication are crucial for preventing accidents and ensuring the well-being of workers.

These challenges follow the operator from the ground to their work position, so the importance of understanding the Mobile Elevated Work Platform training plays an important role.



Management teams must also consider the importance of carrying out a full Risk Assessment including Rescue Planning. Remember not all height rescues are the same and MEWPs may have a different emergency lowering procedure.





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MEWP (Mobile Elevating Work Platform) safety practices are crucial to ensure the safety of workers who operate and work on these elevated platforms. Whether you're using a scissor lift, boom lift, or any other type of MEWP, following proper safety practices is essential. Here are some important MEWP safety practices:

**Training and Certification:** Operators should be properly trained and certified to operate MEWPs. Training should cover the safe operation of the specific type of MEWP they will be using, including understanding controls, stability, and emergency procedures.

**Pre-Use Inspection:** Before using a MEWP, conduct a thorough pre-use inspection. Check for any visible damage, leaks, or other issues that might affect the safe operation of the equipment. Ensure all safety features, such as guardrails and emergency controls, are in proper working condition. **Stability and Ground Conditions:** MEWPs should only be operated on stable, level surfaces. Check the ground conditions to ensure they can support the weight and load of the MEWP. Avoid soft or uneven surfaces that could lead to instability.

**Setting up your MEWP:** Position the MEWP so that it's stable and won't tip over. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for the correct setup. Use outriggers, if available and necessary, to improve stability.





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**Platform Positioning:** Position the platform within the guidelines set from the working envelope by this it allows the workers to reach the work area and minimise risk of overreaching or having the need to climb out of the platform.

**Fall Protection:** Always wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including a harness and lanyard, when working on a MEWP. Attach the harness to the designated anchor points on the platform. The lanyard must be short as possible and restraint not fall arrest.

**Guardrails and Safety Devices:** MEWPs are equipped with guardrails and other safety devices. Do not remove or disable these safety features. Keep all guardrails in place and secure while working on the platform.

**Weight Capacity:** Do not exceed the maximum weight capacity of the MEWP. This includes the combined weight of the operators, tools, and materials on the platform.





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**Safe Movement:** Avoid sudden movements and operate the MEWP smoothly. Use slow and controlled motions, especially when positioning the platform or extending the boom.



**Weather Conditions:** Do not operate MEWPs in strong winds, storms, or other adverse weather conditions that could affect stability and safety.

**Maintain Clearance:** Keep a safe distance from overhead obstacles, power lines, and other hazards. Maintain the required clearance as specified by regulations and manufacturer guidelines.

**Emergency Procedures:** Familiarise yourself with the emergency controls and procedures of the MEWP. Know how to lower the platform in case of a malfunction or power loss.



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**Communication:** If more than one person is involved in the task, ensure clear communication between the operator and ground personnel. Use radios or hand signals as needed.

**Supervision:** If possible, have a designated supervisor or spotter on the ground who can assist in guiding the operator and ensuring overall safety.

**Lockout/Tagout:** When not in use, secure the MEWP and follow proper lockout/tagout procedures to prevent unauthorised use.

**Regular Maintenance:** Perform regular maintenance and inspections on the MEWP according to the manufacturer's recommendations. This helps ensure that the equipment remains in good working condition.

Remember that specific regulations and guidelines may vary depending on your location. Always refer to local regulations, manufacturer instructions, and industry best practices to ensure the highest level of MEWP safety.



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