Toolbox talk

Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)

Trained, checked, set up right, with a rescue plan

10 minutes | For: MEWP operators, people working in the basket and those on the ground

Why it matters

MEWPs provide access for work at height and need careful selection and use. Main dangers include falls, overturning, overhead trapping, and collisions with people, vehicles or overhead cables.

Key points

1. Only operate a MEWP if you have recognised training and a valid card for that type of machine.
2. Get familiar with the controls on the exact model before you use it.
3. Do a visual check every day and report any defects. A faulty MEWP must be taken out of use.
4. Set up on firm, level ground. Watch for trenches, manholes and loose backfill.
5. Extend and chock the outriggers before raising the platform, using spreader plates if the manual says so.
6. If a fall risk remains, wear a harness with a short restraint lanyard clipped to the basket anchor.
7. Watch for overhead structures. People can be trapped between the basket and beams or ceilings.
8. Have a rescue plan, and someone on the ground who can use the ground controls.

Sources: HSE: Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs); HSE: Avoiding trapping and crushing injuries in MEWPs.

This talk supports, but does not replace, your site-specific risk assessment, method statement, training and supervision. Free to copy and use. **tradefoxapp.com/toolbox-talks/mewps**

Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)

Do

- ✓ Check the thorough examination is in date. It's needed at least every six months.
- ✓ Keep the area under the platform clear, and keep the arm out of traffic routes.
- ✓ Choose a model with protected controls where people could be trapped overhead.
- ✓ Check the machine again after severe weather.
- ✓ Rehearse the rescue plan so a trapped person can be freed quickly.

Don't

- ✗ Don't operate near overhead power lines unless it's planned and controlled.
- ✗ Don't use a MEWP with a safety-critical defect. Take it out of use.
- ✗ Don't raise the platform before the outriggers are down and chocked.
- ✗ Don't start work without a rescue plan in place.

Ask the group

- Who on this job is trained on the MEWP we're using?
- What's our rescue plan if the platform gets stuck in the air?
- Where are the trapping hazards overhead on this site?
- Who on the ground knows how to use the ground controls?

If it goes wrong: If someone is trapped or the platform gets stuck at height, stop all movement and raise the alarm. Follow the rescue plan. Only trained people should use the ground controls. Call 999 if anyone is injured or trapped.

On this site

Nearest first aider _____ Emergency assembly point _____

Site-specific hazards and controls _____

_____

Attendance register

Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)

Site / project _____ Date and time _____

Presented by _____ Company _____

	Name (print)	Company	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
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8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

By signing, attendees confirm they took part in this toolbox talk and understood the key points. Keep this record with your site safety file.

Presenter signature _____ Follow-up actions _____

Quick check

Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)

Tick one answer for each question. Your presenter has the answers.

Name _____ Date _____

1. Who can operate a MEWP?

- [ ] Anyone who's watched someone else
- [ ] Only people with recognised training for that type
- [ ] Anyone with a driving licence

2. When should outriggers be extended?

- [ ] Before raising the platform
- [ ] Once you're at height
- [ ] Only on soft ground

3. If a fall risk remains, what should you wear?

- [ ] Nothing extra
- [ ] A harness with a short restraint lanyard
- [ ] A hard hat only

4. How often must a MEWP have a thorough examination?

- [ ] Every five years
- [ ] At least every six months
- [ ] Only when new

5. What must be in place before work starts?

- [ ] A rescue plan and someone who can use the ground controls
- [ ] A second MEWP
- [ ] Nothing

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For the presenter

Answers and sources

Quick check answers

1. Only people with recognised training for that type

HSE says operators need recognised training and a valid card or licence for the category of MEWP.

2. Before raising the platform

HSE says outriggers must be extended and chocked before the platform is raised.

3. A harness with a short restraint lanyard

HSE advises a harness with a short restraint lanyard attached to the manufacturer's anchor point.

4. At least every six months

HSE says MEWPs need a thorough examination at least every six months.

5. A rescue plan and someone who can use the ground controls

HSE says have a rehearsed rescue plan and someone on the ground who can operate the ground controls.

Sources

- HSE: Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/mewp.htm
- HSE: Avoiding trapping and crushing injuries in MEWPs
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins/workplatforms.htm

> **Presenting tips:** keep it to about 10 minutes, use real examples from your site, ask the group questions rather than reading everything out, and record attendance on the register.

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Check it. Set it up. Clip on.

1. **Trained for this machine only**
2. **Outriggers down before you rise**
3. **Watch above for trapping hazards**

Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) toolbox talk

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Sources and qualifications

Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)

Scope: Great Britain safety legislation unless a nation is identified. Northern Ireland has separate legislation. Site rules can be stricter than minimum legal duties; use the site assessment, instructions and competent supervision.

A4 applicability: no installation-design requirement is asserted in this talk. Its claims are referenced to the subject-specific sources below.

S1. HSE: MEWPs

Overturning/entrapment/falls, ground/outriggers, restraints where needed, trained operators, familiarisation, checks and planned rescue; all key points and quiz.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/mewp.htm

S2. HSE: Trapping/crushing in MEWPs

Overhead trapping hazards and protective measures; Do/Don't and emergency.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins/workplatforms.htm

Presenter qualification: The MEWP risk assessment and manufacturer instructions determine restraint needs; do not add a harness arrangement that introduces another hazard.