

Planning Advisory Notice (PAN) Elevating Communication Infrastructure Through the Effective Use of MEWP



Authors: **Brian Bicknese, Justin Miller, Kenneth Hill, and Scott Kisting**

PAN Advisory Group: Michelle Kang, Scott Vance, Scott Stekr, Dale Heath, Brandon Chapman, Carlo Franceschino, Joshua Huff, and Scott Kisting.

The purpose of this PAN is to review and share some best practices for the use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWP) within the telecommunications industry. MEWP's are an incredible tool that can be applied in the telecommunications industry when used properly for a scope of work (SOW) by a competent person(s) who understand their effective uses, training requirements, and proper inspection and maintenance for the site-specific conditions. This PAN reviews considerations an employer should evaluate when renting a MEWP; this is an area that is often overlooked and causes a significant amount of stress on the women and men performing work in the field. Additionally, this PAN is intended to raise awareness on the standards that apply to the use of MEWP's, the training required to operate a MEWP, and some of the performance and maintenance considerations.

MEWP's have been traditionally referenced in the telecommunications industry as Aerial Work Platforms or Aerial Lifts, but they also include equipment such as man lifts, boom lifts, scissor lifts and other equipment similar to offerings from companies such as JLG and GENIE. Properly selected MEWP's utilized in the telecommunications industry are designed to help competent or authorized individuals perform work at heights when other methods may not be practicable or efficient. ANSI/SAIA have developed safe use standards; the ANSI/SAIA A92.24-2018 (employer specific training requirements) and ANSI/SAIA A92.22 (manufacturer emphasis) cover the main topics needed to properly train, inspect and utilize a MEWP in conjunction with the manufacturer's equipment specific requirements.

Some employers have their own MEWP's and work with the manufacturers to develop their own maintenance program. By creating this program, employers are able to ensure that their equipment is functional and safe,



and it also allows them to develop proper training for the women and men that will be using the MEWP. However, there are times that MEWP'S must be rented, which creates unique concerns when it comes to maintenance, performance, and training.

A principle concern when renting a MEWP is ensuring that the rented equipment will be functional when the employees arrive on site to perform the SOW. An all-too-common occurrence that the women and men performing work face (especially when traveling great distances to complete a SOW) is choosing to utilize a poorly maintained MEWP, or remaining on site for an extended period waiting for a replacement MEWP to be delivered. Below are some best practice recommendations that can help offset these risks when renting a MEWP:

1. Work with known reputable rental firms who have robust maintenance programs that conform to manufacturer specifications.
2. Request the current maintenance status for the rented MEWP prior to delivery.
3. Request the Operator's Manual to be delivered with the MEWP (or a digital copy prior to delivery). **NOTE: Operator's Manual (digital or hard copy) is required to be with the MEWP once on-site.**
4. Require pictures of the MEWP that will be rented.

MEWP maintenance concerns are not unique to rental situations; an employer's competent person should follow the employer's maintenance program for their MEWP's for several reasons:

1. It is the competent person's responsibility to the employer and the other employees to ensure the MEWP is properly maintained and inspected.



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2. It enables the competent person to understand and communicate the use parameters of the MEWP as well as its limitations.
3. They support all involved with the use to have confidence in the MEWP and be aware of what to do in the event of onsite issues.
4. Often overlooked is the ability to properly stow and transport the MEWP; ensuring that the MEWP is correctly secured prior to transport may reduce the incidences of damage to the MEWP in transport.

Proper planning is key to ensuring the correct MEWP arrives on-site. Doing so prevents situations where the MEWP that is secured will not successfully complete the SOW; e.g., the MEWP's platform is five feet (5') short on the side of a building where work is to be performed.

While preplanning is critical to secure the proper equipment, on-site evaluation is also vital as it must verify the following:

1. Site ground evaluations:
 - Standing water
 - Mud
 - Broken asphalt
 - Sign of poor or unstable soil
 - Unlevel locations around the site
 - Vaults or voids
2. Understanding situational geographics concerning what you can load/unload and what angles and clearances are available.
3. Capacity for material handling. Remember the more weight in the MEWP the more likely it is to become unstable.
4. How many people are needed to complete the requisite scope of work.



5. Understanding swing radius for the MEWP (especially with an articulated MEWP).
6. Transition planning from the MEWP to the structure if the SOW requires.

Future PAN'S will look in depth at some of the major planning requirements outlined above. This PAN is intended to introduce the subject; and of critical importance is training.

Training for the operation of MEWP's is covered in A92.24. While A92.24 serves as guidance for telecommunications workers, employers still have a responsibility to ensure that training is in place for the specific MEWP that is to be used by the authorized and competent person(s). The employer is responsible for designing and implementing training that is compliant with A92.24. Some key considerations employers may implement, include, but are not limited to:



1. Application of MEWP use (classroom).
2. Practical hands-on experience.
3. Identification and use of the controls.
4. Inspection of the MEWP.
5. Understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the MEWP.
6. Safety protocols to lower platform to the ground (bleed down).
7. Rescue planning with the MEWP.
8. Stabilization techniques such as ground mats and cribbing, and their application.
9. Deeming a competent person in accordance with OSHA requirements.
10. Reviewing manufacturer specific operating requirements.
11. Reviewing performance evaluations with employees.
12. Proper use of fall protection; e.g., fall restraint and fall arrest.

Best practices in deploying MEWP's for a SOW includes both understanding what standards apply as well as the manufacturers requirements. It is required to utilize a safety minded approach that considers both the quality of work performed and safeguarding the women and men in the field. In order to properly implement such a safety minded approach, it is essential to clarify the common nomenclature concerning the use of MEWP's for the safe deployment and maintenance of telecommunications infrastructure.

In subsequent PAN'S, there will be further exploration of some of the misinformation concerning nomenclature and discuss the difference between a MEWP and a bucket truck. In addition, due to the demand for small cells there will be a specific PAN on the use of MEWP's and bucket trucks for the deployment and maintenance of small cell equipment. ●

