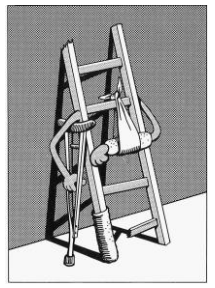


Taranaki Newsletter



“Anyone who believes that they have common sense has simply forgotten who taught them what they know.”

The topic for this month is **Scissor Lifts**. Scissor lifts, also commonly known as **MEWP** (mobile elevated work platforms), can be fatal if not used correctly. Serious harm and fatalities can also result from other mobile plant on your site, whether that is trucks, cranes, concrete pumps or excavators.

Completely eliminating mobile plant on your site can be difficult to achieve, which means controlling the risk through isolation and minimisation. In most instances you will rely heavily on minimisation to reduce the likelihood of an accident, and when something goes wrong, the consequences are severe.

Managing the risks around mobile plant on your site requires control over a range of issues that could contribute to an accident. The key message is **Safe Site, Safe Plant and Safe Operator**.

What do you need to know?

There are many different **hazards** and **risks** associated with scissor lifts:

- Machine striking person
- Unstable machinery
- Excavations
- Overhead powerlines
- Overhead construction
- Falls
- Underground services
- Weather conditions
- Falling objects
- Noise

What do you need to do now?

1. **Nature of the Work:** Make sure the scissor lift is the right machine for the job.

- Will it be needed for reach, height or access?
 - If using it for access make sure it is positioned as close as possible to the structure.

- Will it be used indoors, outdoors or both?

Note: There may be a reduction in capacity and loadings when using it outdoors.

2. **Set-Up Stability:** An unevenly set-up machine will affect the stability of the platform as it extends in height or reach.

- Scissor lifts and other MEWP's are designed to be used on level, stable surfaces. If this is not possible use outriggers or stabilisers to level the machine.
- Outriggers should be fully extended, on firm foundations, and depending on the manufacturer's specification, make sure that the wheels are free from the ground.
- Also take caution when using ramps to load and unload the machine from the transporter.

3. Operator Competency: Your ability to operate the MEWP effectively will significantly reduce the likelihood of an accident.

- You need to have the required knowledge and skills to conduct an effective hazard and risk assessment on site.
- Make sure you are familiar with the scissor lift you will be using.
- Read and understand the operator's manual.
- Know the MEWP safety features. This includes understanding how the retrieval system works (having a rescue plan in place and understanding how to lower the platform in an emergency).
- During training, the trainee must be supervised until that person is considered competent by the instructor who has the knowledge, experience and qualifications.
- Understand the machine's limits.
- Harnesses are not required when operating scissor lifts, but other risks (unguarded roofs or difficult job tasks) may highlight the need to use a harness.
- Above all, have the courage to admit if you can't operate the MEWP effectively and safely.

4. Pre Start Checks: It's not about ticking a box, it's about making sure the MEWP is safe.

(Documenting this process should make sure this is being done)

- The operator must give the MEWP a visual inspection and functional test before using it.
- Make sure the scissor lift's six monthly certificate is current
- If you own a MEWP, make sure you carry out your responsibilities to complete periodic and major inspections.

5. Work Platform:

- Make sure the platform is slip-resistant, free-draining and in a sound condition.
- Make sure the guardrails are in a sound condition, and toe boards are in place (**Do not stand on rails**).
- Make sure access gate is self-closing and self-latching. If using a drop bar, make sure a kick plate is in place and that the drop bar stops in line with the mid-rail.

6. Machine Warning Devices:

- Make sure these are working.

7. Safety Exclusion Zones:

- Have well-defined MEWP traffic routes free from obstructions.
- Make every effort to separate pedestrians from mobile plant (barriers).
- Identify trapping and crushing hazards.

Here is a link to the new guideline on mobile elevated work platforms:

www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/all-guidance-items/mewp/mewp-pdf