

## MOBILE ELEVATED WORK PLATFORMS - GROUND STABILITY

**This safety alert has been generated as a result of concerns that have been raised due to unstable ground whilst operating Vehicle Mounted Mobile Elevated Work Platforms.**

It is a legal requirement that operators of mobile elevated work platforms (MEWP) to check and verify the overall stability of the MEWP in relation to local conditions of operation.

Where there is doubt about the safety of a particular siting, the advice of a competent person shall be sought, i.e. an engineering professional holding formal engineering qualifications (eg Civil, Structural or Geotechnical).

Such conditions derive different control measures:

### **Soft surfaces and in close proximity to excavation or embankments**

- Consideration should be given to siting the MEWP in another location.
- Where a MEWP is required to work in the vicinity of an excavation or an embankment, the possibility of slip or collapse of the supporting surface shall be evaluated by a competent person.
- Where necessary, the excavation or embankment shall be reinforced.
- An MEWP shall not travel over or be operated on soft or waterlogged surfaces unless appropriate measures are taken to ensure stability of the base should be used to distribute the operational loads under the support points of the MEWP so that the bearing capacity of the supporting surface is not exceeded.
  - Mats,
  - steel plates,



- timber sleepers
- This should be determined by a competent person.

### **In riverbed, tidal and floodwater areas**

- Appropriate precautions shall be taken to protect MEWPs required to stand in flowing water against specific hazards, such as scouring the surface around the MEWP.
- The effectiveness of the measures shall be regularly monitored.

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### Over or in close proximity to cellars, underground cavities and services

- The site shall be checked for the presence of underground cavities, basements or underground services, ducts and the like.
- Where the check reveals the existence of underground cavities, basements or underground services, precautions shall be taken to ensure the stability of the MEWP and MEWP standing.
- Backpropping and reinforcement shall be determined and signed off by a competent person.

### On sloping surfaces or undulating ground

- Before elevating the MEWP it shall be located and levelled in compliance with the instructions developed.
- Where the manufacturer's specifications are not known, the competent person shall determine the maximum allowable working slope using calculations and tests to AS 1418.10.

### Proximity to traffic

- The Worksite Safety - Traffic Management Code of Practice 2010 (The Code) and Australian Standard 1742.31 provide practical guidance for different control measures which can be used to provide a safe roadside worksite.
- Where a safety barrier is used, it shall meet or exceed the requirements in The Code and Australian Standards 1742.3 and AS/NZS 3845.1:2015. Safety barriers may be required where any of the following occur

### Safety barriers should be used when:

- There is potential for workers or roadwork

plant to be struck by passing traffic,

- There is potential for passing traffic to impact hazardous objects or deep excavations within the worksite,
- There is potential for a vehicle to impact a worksite structure and cause collapse

It is the recommendation of the ETU that if any of the above circumstances arise and a control(s) measure cannot be developed and verified by a competent person, **work should cease**. Contact your supervisor, designated Health & Safety Representative, your local organiser or alternatively you Union OH&S Officer.