ELEVATING WORK PLATFORM
ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

P O Box 8109
Cherrywood
Tauranga, 3145

INDUSTRY GUIDANCE – SITING

Overview:

Correct siting of a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) is essential to safe and efficient operation. Before a MEWP is positioned, the work area should be assessed to identify hazards, evaluate ground and structural conditions, and verify that the selected machine can be operated safely within the proposed environment. Factors such as ground stability, nearby structures, overhead obstructions, public access, environmental conditions, and available operating clearances can all influence safety and operational performance.

This guidance document outlines the key considerations for selecting and positioning a MEWP on site. By completing a thorough site assessment and addressing identified hazards before work begins, operators and planners can reduce the likelihood of instability, collisions, entrapment, environmental impacts, and restricted access to emergency controls. Site conditions should continue to be monitored and reassessed whenever the work location changes or conditions vary, to ensure the MEWP remains suitable for the task being undertaken.

General Requirements

The following factors shall be considered when selecting and positioning a MEWP:

- Site assessment
- Support surfaces
- Proximity hazards and visibility
- Environmental factors, e.g. noise and noxious fumes and confined spaces
- Clearances
- Access to emergency controls

Site Assessment and Control Measures

The work area shall be assessed before work begins for local hazards, including overhead structures, ruts, slopes, slippery or soft conditions, rocks, branches, and accumulations of debris. Current and forecast weather conditions shall also be considered.

This assessment shall cover the entire intended work area. If siting differs from the original plan, for example where the MEWP is relocated to undertake a different task, the site assessment should be reviewed.

Where there is any doubt regarding the safety of a particular siting location, advice should be sought from a competent person.

Support Surfaces

General

A competent person shall ensure that the loads imposed by the MEWP can be adequately supported by the ground or any other supporting structure. Particular attention should be given to sites that have been recently disturbed or prepared, and areas that may be subject to flooding. NOTE: Loads imposed on the supporting surface by wheels and outriggers are specified in the operator's manual and on the MEWP.

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Excavations and Embankments

Before positioning a MEWP near an excavation or embankment, consideration should be given to locating the MEWP elsewhere. Where a MEWP is required to operate in the vicinity of an excavation or embankment, the potential for slip or collapse of the supporting surface shall be assessed by a competent person. Where required, the excavation or embankment shall be reinforced.

Soft Surfaces

A MEWP shall not travel over or be operated on soft or waterlogged surfaces unless it has been designed for that purpose (e.g. tracked MEWPs), or suitable measures have been implemented to ensure the stability of the base. Mats, steel plates, timber sleepers, or similar load-spreading devices should be used beneath the support points of the MEWP to ensure the bearing capacity of the supporting surface is not exceeded.

Riverbed, Tidal or Floodwater Areas

Where MEWPs are required to stand in flowing water, precautions shall be implemented to protect against specific hazards, such as scouring of the supporting surface around the MEWP. The effectiveness of these precautions shall be monitored regularly.

Working Over Cellars, Ground Cavities or Underground Services

The site shall be checked for the presence of underground cavities, basements, underground services, ducts, and similar features. Where such conditions are identified, precautions shall be taken to maintain the stability of the MEWP.

Working on Structures

Supporting structures such as bridges, wharves, jetties, building structures, or suspended concrete slabs shall be assessed by a competent person to ensure they are capable of supporting the operational forces imposed by the MEWP.

Proximity Hazards and Visibility

Proximity hazards shall be identified and assessed, including the following:
(a) Overhead power lines (see Clause 5.10).
(b) Nearby structures.
(c) Fixed hazards, including the risk of elevating or travelling into adjacent and overhead structures.
(d) Excavations.
(e) Personnel movement (including members of the public) within the MEWP working area.
(f) Mobile equipment movement within the MEWP working area, including those parts of the MEWP that may encroach into the path of passing traffic.
(g) Public access areas, including roadways, railways, rivers, and aircraft flight paths.
(h) The effects of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) (e.g. busbars, strobe lights, induction furnaces, welding) on radio, infrared, or electronic controls.
(i) Temporary installations, e.g. scaffolding, tilt-up bracing, and formwork.
(j) The vicinity of airfields (applicable depending on the operating height of the MEWP). NOTE: In some situations, aircraft warning lights will need to be fitted to the highest part of the MEWP and the boom sections painted in high visibility colours in accordance with AS 1318.
(k) Obstructions and other hazards within the MEWP's stopping distance.
(l) The presence of atmospheric contaminants.
(m) Openings, penetrations, and edges of structures.

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Environmental Factors

Appropriate measures should be taken to minimise the effects of noise, exhaust emissions, hydraulic fluids, lubricants, fuel, dust, and other environmental pollutants generated by the MEWP. Refer to Appendix A for guidance on environmental conditions and severity of use.

Clearances

Consideration should be given to the operating space required, taking into account the following:
(a) The physical size of the MEWP.
(b) Access routes.
(c) The tail/boom swing of the MEWP.
(d) Access to and egress from the platform.

Access to Ground Controls

The MEWP shall be positioned so that sufficient clearance is provided to allow access to the ground or auxiliary controls in all foreseeable operating positions.

The MEWP shall be kept free from obstructions and objects that could restrict access to the ground or auxiliary controls.

Sample MEWP Selection Site Checklist – Guidance Only

Page 4 and 5 of this guidance document includes a sample checklist designed to assist in the selection of MEWPs.
Please note:

- This checklist is not exhaustive and should not be treated as a definitive resource.
- It is intended as a general guidance tool to aid competent persons in the selection process.
- All competent persons responsible for selecting MEWPs must consider all relevant factors specific to the task and operating environment to ensure the correct MEWP is chosen.

References:

AS2550.10:2025 – Section 4 MEWP selection and control measures
Silvercard – Using MEWPs Safely

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MEWP SELECTION SITE CHECKLIST - THIS IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST AND IS PROVIDED AS GUIDANCE ONLY. THIS CHECKLIST DOES NOT REPLACE A SITE-SPECIFIC RISK ASSESSMENT.	
Task Requirements	
☐	What task(s) are to be performed?
☐	What working height is required?
☐	What horizontal reach / outreach is required?
☐	Is up-and-over capability required?
☐	How many personnel will be in the platform?
☐	What is the combined weight of personnel, tools, equipment and materials?
☐	Is the platform size and rated capacity adequate for the task?
Access & Workspace	
☐	Can the work area be safely accessed by the MEWP?
☐	Are access and travel routes suitable for delivery, positioning and relocation of the MEWP?
☐	Are there any width, height or weight restrictions?
☐	Is the work area confined or restricted?
☐	Are there overhead obstructions or structural limitations?
☐	Are temporary structures such as scaffolding, formwork, tilt-up bracing or similar installations present?
☐	Are tail swing or boom elbow swing restrictions present?
☐	Will the work impact pedestrians, vehicles or the public?
☐	Will ground/emergency controls remain accessible in all operating positions?
Ground Conditions	
☐	Is the ground capable of supporting the machine load?
☐	Have wheel loads and outrigger/stabilizer loads been considered?
☐	Are underground services, cellars, basements, tanks, trenches or voids present?
☐	Are excavations, trenches, embankments or retaining walls present near the proposed setup location?
☐	Is the ground level, or within the machine operating slope?
☐	Are outriggers or stabilizers required?
☐	Are spreader plates or outrigger mats required?
☐	Will the MEWP be operated on a suspended slab, bridge, wharf, mezzanine, podium deck or other structure?
Environmental Conditions	
☐	Will the MEWP be used indoors or outdoors?
☐	What are the expected wind conditions?
☐	Is the machine rated for the anticipated wind conditions?
☐	Will wind monitoring be required during operation?
☐	Will materials carried create additional wind loading?
☐	Are adverse weather conditions likely?
☐	Are there environmental constraints such as noise, emissions or temperature limits?
Electrical Hazards	
☐	Are overhead power lines present?
☐	Have minimum approach distances been identified?
☐	Is an electrically insulated MEWP required?
☐	Are underground electrical services present?

SAMPLE

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Machine Selection	
☐	Is the MEWP suitable for the intended task and manufacturer intended use?
☐	Are machine dimensions suitable for the work area?
☐	Is machine mass suitable for site conditions?
☐	What power source is required?
☐	If engine-powered, is ventilation adequate?
☐	Is rough-terrain capability required?
☐	Is 4WD / 4WS or crawler-track configuration required?
☐	Does the machine need to travel significant distances across the site?
Special Hazards	
☐	Are flammable gases, vapours, dusts or explosive atmospheres present?
☐	Is a hazardous-area-rated MEWP required?
☐	Cell towers. Radio frequency hazards?
☐	Are there sources of electromagnetic interference that could affect operation?
Safety Requirements	
☐	Are operators trained, familiarised and authorised?
☐	Is there a risk of operator entrapment or crushing?
☐	Is secondary guarding required?
☐	What fall protection equipment is required?
☐	Are suitable anchor points available within the platform?
☐	Has an emergency rescue plan been developed?
☐	Are trained personnel available to carry out an emergency rescue?
Final Verification	
☐	The selected MEWP is suitable for the task.
☐	Site conditions have been assessed.
☐	Hazards have been identified and controlled.
☐	Manufacturer instructions have been reviewed.
☐	Safe operation can be achieved for the duration of the work.