

Carrying Equipment in Mobile Elevating Work Platforms

Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) are often used to elevate personnel and equipment for construction tasks. However, there are a few basic points that must be considered.

1. As a general rule the load should fit inside the confines of the platform AND still facilitate access, emergency egress and not compromise the operation of the controls.
2. The weight of the equipment, personnel and tools **must** not exceed the Rated Capacity or Safe Working Load of that particular machine.
3. Where will the equipment and tools be placed? Tools must not be stored or placed on or in the vicinity of the controls. Equipment should not become a hazard to operators and other occupants.
4. Placing loads directly on the handrails is not permitted. Some manufacturers can supply special racks to contain the loads, but it must be recognised that:
 - 4.1. Racks can only be fitted to a limited number of MEWPs and only after a proper analysis of the MEWP/rack combination.
 - 4.2. The rack forms part of the MEWP and its addition constitutes a modification to the MEWP. Modifications to MEWPs must be notified to the respective Workcover Authority as an alteration to the design. (Variations to the notification requirements exist between the respective authorities).
 - 4.3. Equipment should not exceed the confines of the platform unless approved by the manufacturer or a competent person and the following factors have been considered:
 - a. The effect of the load applied to the platform structure.
 - b. The size of the load and the effect of wind load.
 - c. The location of the load with respect to the support point of the platform. The rated capacity of the platform is generally considered to be uniformly distributed over the platform floor (eg placing heavy loads on the edges of the platform will overload the levelling system and potentially reduce the stability of the MEWP).
 - d. The height of the load, being above the handrails the overall cog of the load is greater than the original design load. This will affect platform levelling, the structure and stability.
 - e. The effect of the rack and load with respect to access/egress and operation.
 - f. The possibility of entanglement of the load on obstructions and the effect that this could have on the structure, stability and visibility.
 - g. The possibility of the load moving close to live electrical conductors.
5. When racks are supplied they should be accompanied with the following safe use information:
 - 5.1 Installation instructions - including the MEWP model(s) to which the rack can be fitted.
 - 5.2 Specifications regarding: The capacity of the rack and the combined capacity of the rack and MEWP. (Generally the total rated capacity will be less than that of the MEWP fitted without racks).
 - 5.3 The load size and shape - i.e. the maximum size and shape of the load that can be carried.
 - 5.4 The maximum wind speed - which should be 0m/s (indoor use only - sheltered from winds) or at least 12.5m/s.
 - 5.5 Recommended methods for securing the load.
 - 5.6 The tare weight of the rack(s).
 - 5.7 Instructions for use - including prohibitions and residual risks.
 - 5.8 The rack should also be marked and decals supplied that reflect the specification.