

SAFETY ALERT

OVERTURNED BOOM-TYPE ELEVATING WORK PLATFORM

March 2011

The purpose of this alert is to remind those who operate elevating work platforms (EWPs) about the dangers of operating such machines.

BACKGROUND

In a recent incident, a painter fell about 10 metres when the boom-type elevating work platform (EWP) that he was working in overturned.

While painting the gutters of an apartment block, the painter moved the EWP's boom. Because the EWP was located on a slope with a gradient greater than that recommended by the EWP's manufacturer, it overturned and flung the painter from the basket. The painter died from his injuries. In the photo below, note the location of the EWP – that is, the narrowness of the driveway and the slope of the ground (about 11 degrees down the length of the driveway and 6 degrees along the width of the driveway).



The overturned boom-type EWP

ACTION REQUIRED

WorkCover reminds employers and principal contractors to ensure that competent people operate 'fit for purpose' plant that are suitable for specific site conditions.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* requires employers and those in control of workplaces to take all necessary steps to ensure that safe systems of work are implemented and maintained, and that persons undertaking them are provided with adequate information, training and supervision to ensure their safety.

Part 5.4 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001* requires employers to ensure that risks arising from the installation and use of plant are controlled. They should do this by referring to the instructions of the plant's designers and manufacturers.

Clause 264B of the regulation outlines licensing obligations. Operators must hold a national high-risk licence for a boom-type elevating work platform (WP), where the boom length is 11 metres or more in length.

Use the following control measures to prevent EWP's from overturning:

- Select an EWP that is suitable for the task and site conditions.
- Ensure that an EWP is operated by a competent person who follows the EWP manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not exceed the safe working load (SWL) of an EWP.
- Check ground conditions along an EWP's planned travel path and its work area to ensure that the terrain is level and free from obstructions. Do not operate an EWP on slopes where the gradient exceeds the limits prescribed by the EWP's manufacturer. If this is not possible, a different EWP or an alternative, such as scaffolding, may be required.
- When an EWP is located near the side of an embankment or excavation, ensure that the ground can support the SWL of the EWP.
- Locate and avoid underground services and voids. In circumstances where it is reasonable for an EWP to travel or stand above these, additional strengthening may be needed.
- Do not operate an EWP on soft surfaces, unless measures are taken to evenly distribute its load (eg mats or similar aids).
- Monitor weather conditions, such as rain and wind speed. Rain may soften the ground. Do not use an EWP when the wind exceeds limits specified by the manufacturer.
- Before moving an EWP, the boom should be fully lowered to its travel position. A lower centre of gravity provides more stability.
- Before raising the basket, chock the wheels and extend the outriggers (if they are required).
- Ensure that level indicators, where fitted, are used and monitored at all times.
- In an emergency, machine failure or when a warning device is sounded, stop operation, lower the basket to the rest position and make the EWP safe.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- AS 2550.10-2006: *Cranes, hoists and winches – Safe use – Mobile elevating work platforms.*

Disclaimer

This publication may contain occupational health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au).

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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