

ASP Safety Alert Network Compliance & Authorisations

Alert Number: SA06_22

24 May 2022

Subject: Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) – Fall From Deck

Dear ASPs,

What happened

During works on Ausgrid's overhead fibre optic network, a tree branch became trapped between the top and lower booms of a truck mounted MEWP. The assigned safety observer communicated with the MEWP operator, then moved onto the deck of the truck to remove the tree branch. Whilst attempting removal the tree branch snapped causing the worker to overbalance and fall from the truck.

The worker fell approximately 2 metres from the rear of the MEWP resulting in a broken collarbone, three fractured ribs and a hematoma on their head.

Causes / Contributing factors

Several key factors contributed to the incident, including:

- Change management - the MEWP was parked driver-side to the kerb to minimise traffic impacts and hazards, however this resulted in a tree encroaching on the MEWP boom when it was later lowered
- Hazard awareness – Workers failed to identify and be aware of the fall risk and the release of stored energy associated with removing the tree branch
- Substitution - An alternate method to remove the tree branch was available (hand saw) however, this method was not considered at the time of the incident
- Control - Lack of adequate fall protection within the area of the MEWP that the worker accessed to remove the tree branch

Key messages

When working on or near a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) you must :

- **Prior to commencement of work, Complete a detailed Hazard Assessment Conversation (HAC) specific to the work location and activity**
- **Utilise Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) relevant to the task being performed**
- **Apply and monitor all identified risk controls**
- **Use appropriate tools and equipment to perform tasks safely**
- **If there are changes to the work activity or additional hazards are identified then this must be reassessed with the work crew and recorded in the HAC**

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