

Safety Guide 5: *Use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms in Tree Work*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This leaflet provides an overview of safety guidance for anyone who is required to use a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) to carry out tree work. The guidance is summarised from the Technical Guide on the subject (TG5): *Use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms in Tree Work*.

It contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

It is assumed that if you are applying the principles and guidance laid out here, then the decision that it is necessary to use a MEWP has already been made.

For guidance on making that decision, reference should be made to the *Industry Code of Practice for Arboriculture: Tree Work at Height* (ICoP) and TG5.

1.2 Everyone using MEWPs for tree work operations can use this leaflet as outline safety guidance to check that operators are following industry guidance.

1.3 This leaflet is not a substitute for adequate training.

1.4 This leaflet is not a substitute for the full Technical Guide.

1.5 In accordance with the ICoP, the key principles of tree work at height must be adopted when using this leaflet.

It is essential that:

- a. all work at height is properly planned, organised, supervised and managed;
- b. lifting and lowering systems are properly designed, including the compatibility and correct configuration of components within each system;
- c. any equipment used is suitable for the task and subject to periodic inspection and examination;
- d. maintenance of equipment is carried out to ensure all equipment remains safe for use; *and*
- e. everyone engaged in using a MEWP in tree work operations has the appropriate training and experience to be proficient in tasks they are required to undertake.

1.6 For further guidance you should consult Technical Guide 5: *Use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms in Tree Work*, and undertake appropriate training.

2.0 Planning and Management

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
2.a	Is a MEWP the safest method of undertaking the work at height?			
2.b	Has the work been carefully planned to avoid unnecessary work at height?			
2.c	Are sufficient operators on site to manage the work safely and efficiently?			
2.d	Is the MEWP operator competent to operate the MEWP being used?			
2.e	Is a competent person immediately available to control work on site?			
2.f	Do operators and supervisors clearly understand their roles and responsibilities?			
2.g	Does everyone on site have the correct PPE and is it in good condition?			
2.h	Is there a site-specific risk assessment that is suitable and sufficient?			
2.i	Do operators understand the risk assessment?			
2.j	Does everyone on site understand the communication method between aerial operators and ground staff?			
2.k	Is there a suitable and effective rescue plan?			
2.l	Can the specified arboricultural works reasonably be undertaken from a MEWP?			
2.m	Have any additional risks to wildlife been suitably controlled?			
2.n	Is there a method statement to identify the safe system of work?			
2.o	Has the MEWP been thoroughly examined, and have pre-use checks been completed?			
2.p	Are the correct tools available? Are they in good condition?			
2.q	Have all necessary permissions been obtained for the work to be undertaken?			

3.0 MEWP Selection

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
3.a	Does the MEWP have sufficient height and outreach to access all parts of the tree that require work? Do operators know what the MEWP's working envelope is?			
3.b	Can the MEWP safely travel across the site to the work area, taking into account any repositioning, width restrictions and variations in ground conditions?			
3.c	Can an adequate drop zone be provided for the cut material?			
3.d	Do operators know how to safely secure the MEWP in a transport position for moving to and across the work site?			
3.e	Do operators know how to safely secure any extending features such as outrigger legs before repositioning the MEWP?			
3.f	Is there sufficient room on the site to turn the machine to get it into the correct set-up position?			

4.0 MEWP Set-up

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
4.a	Is it safe to set up the MEWP to undertake tree work in the current weather conditions?			
4.b	Are the weight of the MEWP and the load variations on wheels and other ground-based supports known?			
4.c	Will the ground type support the MEWP intended for use and any spreader plates used to set it up?			
4.d	Are plans available to help identify the location and route of underground services on site?			
4.e	Have any above-ground utility services been identified and appropriate controls introduced to work around them?			

5.0 MEWP Use for Tree Work

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
5.a	Do operators know the maximum load for the working platform and understand how hand-held branch removal can affect the load?			
5.b	Is a safe and suitable drop zone identified to avoid cut timber sections striking any part of the MEWP or other vulnerable targets?			
5.c	Are safety and drop zones clearly identified and is access to them controlled, with barriers available if required?			
5.d	Is the work planned to avoid working ropes and cut timber sections becoming fouled on any part of the MEWP?			

6.0 MEWPs and Highways

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
6.a	Do operators have the necessary permissions to place a MEWP on the public highway?			
6.b	Is traffic management or a temporary road closure required and in place before setting up the MEWP on site?			
6.c	Do you know the maximum load for the road and is the MEWP identified for the work appropriate?			
6.d	Do you understand how MEWP movements affect the weight distribution on the road?			
6.e	Is a safe and suitable drop zone identified to avoid cut timber sections damaging the road?			

7.0 Electrical Utility Work on behalf of the Network Operator (NO)

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
7.a	Are operators authorised by the Network Operator to use MEWPs on the network?			
7.b	Do operators have the required permits from the Network Operator to allow work to start?			
7.c	Does the Network Operator know exactly where operators are on site?			
7.d	Does the MEWP meet the requirements of the Network Operator to allow work in electrically DEAD/ LIVE conditions?			
7.e	Do operators have additional equipment available, e.g. earthing equipment to ensure electrically safe use of the MEWP?			
7.f	Is a safe and suitable drop zone identified to avoid cut timber sections damaging the electrical network above and below ground?			

8.0 MEWPs and Emergency Tree Work

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
8.a	Do operators have the tree owner's permission to undertake the work?			
8.b	Has the hazard and risk assessment identified that it is safe to use a MEWP in the circumstances, e.g. adverse weather?			
8.c	Can the MEWP be set up in a safe area should trees move unexpectedly, e.g. partially windblown trees?			
8.d	Is there sufficient light to work safely?			
8.e	Have any utility services been identified and made safe?			
8.f	Is a system in place to exclude third parties from the work area?			

9.0 MEWPs and Waterways

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
9.a	Do all operators at risk of falling into the water have a life jacket?			
9.b	Is there a rescue plan to recover any operators that may fall into the water?			
9.c	Has the impact of the works been assessed, including how the equipment to be used may affect the watercourse and surrounding habitat?			
9.d	Have operators got the correct permission for the works?			

10.0 Emergency Rescue from a MEWP Work Platform

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
10.a	Is there a rescue plan to recover any operators trapped at height?			
10.b	Are competent operators immediately available to participate in a rescue?			
10.c	Is any dedicated rescue equipment immediately available?			

11.0 Aerial Rescue of a Climber Using a MEWP

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
11.a	Is there a rescue plan to recover a tree climber trapped at height?			
11.b	Is it safe and efficient to use a MEWP to rescue the trapped climber?			
11.c	Are competent operators immediately available to participate in a rescue?			
11.d	Is any dedicated rescue equipment immediately available?			

12.0 MEWP Inspection Regimes

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
12.a	Is a valid record of thorough examination available?			
12.b	Have a Pre-delivery Inspection (PDI) and an On-delivery Inspection (ODI) been undertaken for a hired-in MEWP?			
12.c	Has the weekly check been undertaken and recorded?			
12.d	Has the operator undertaken daily checks?			

13.0 Operator Proficiency

Ref.	Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
13.a	Is the operator trained and competent in MEWP operation?			
13.b	Is the operator trained and competent in appropriate tree work techniques?			
13.c	Are operators competent in the use and inspection of PPE?			
13.d	Are operators trained in rescue and familiar with the site-specific rescue plan?			

Notes

Date of observations:			
Location:			
Observer's name:		Signature:	
Who is being observed?			
Comments:			
Actions:			
Reference:			
Actions completed date:			
Confirmed by:		Signature:	

Further information

This safety guide is one of a series produced by the **Arboricultural Association (AA)**. There is also a wide range of additional safety and technical information in relation to arboriculture on the AA website: www.trees.org.uk
 For safety information in relation to forestry visit the **Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA)** website: www.ukfisa.com
 For more general information about health and safety related to tree work, visit the **Health and Safety Executive** website: www.hse.gov.uk/treework/index.htm

Further reading

Industry Code of Practice for Arboriculture – Tree work at height (second edition, May 2020)
 Technical Guide 1: *Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue*
 Technical Guide 2: *Use of Tools in the Tree*
 Technical Guide 3: *Rigging and Dismantling*
 Technical Guide 4: *Use of Mobile Cranes in Tree Work*
 Technical Guide 5: *Use of Mobile Elevating Work Platforms in Tree Work*
 FISA 802: *Emergency Planning*
 FISA 805: *Training and Certification*