

BRIEFING NOTE – 22/03/2021

To: Members of the HSW Community of Practice

From: Director HSW University Operations

Subject: Safe Work Australia Guidance - inspecting and maintaining elevating work platforms

Background

In January 2021 Safe Work Australia released new guidance material for inspecting and maintaining elevated work platforms (EWPs). Summarised here is advice on requirements to be observed by staff and students. The complete guide is found [here](#).

Elevating work platforms (EWPs)

EWPs are powered mobile plant designed to lift or lower people and equipment by a telescopic, hinged or articulated device, or any combination of these, from a base support. EWPs are generally of either an articulated or boom-type variety.

Where EWPs are in use, supervisors and managers should observe the following Approved Codes of Practice:

- [How-to-manage-work-health-and-safety-risks.pdf](#)
- [Managing-risks-of-plant-in-the-workplace.pdf](#)
- [Managing-the-risk-of-falls-at-workplaces.pdf](#)

Before operators start using EWPs, training must be provided about its functions and any current safe work methods and emergency procedures. There is a minimum standard of training expected for workers who operate EWPs. Refer to the Minimum Standard of Training Checklist contained in the [Safe Work SA : Mobile elevating work platforms guideline](#).

In the University context, there are three ways a School or Branch might use or require the use of an EWP:

- they may own an EWP for use in their operations;
- hire or lease an EWP for use in their area;
- engage contractors for an undertaking that involves the use of an EWP.

1. Where the University owns an elevated work platform

When to inspect	At a minimum, the WHS Regulations require inspections of an EWP to be carried out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, if any, or • if there are no manufacturer's recommendations, based on a competent person's recommendations, or • if it is not reasonably practicable to comply with the above, annually.
What to inspect	Inspections must at least cover critical components and must ensure operational control and safety systems function as designed. 'Critical components' are the plant components whose failure or malfunction may affect the health and safety of persons using the EWP or who are in its vicinity. Manufacturers normally provide recommendations for what an inspection should include. If there are no manufacturer's recommendations, inspections must be based on a competent person's recommendations.
How to inspect	Inspections may include simple visual observations, functional testing, testing or measuring against acceptance criteria and identifying defects like damage or corrosion. With any form of inspection there should be supporting documentation or information to guide the inspector on how to inspect the item and how to confirm that the component is in a safe condition. You must ensure any monitoring and testing of the EWPs is carried out by a competent person.
Additional monitoring & testing	In addition to pre-operational, routine and periodic inspections, EWPs should be monitored closely and tested against the manufacturer's specifications or any relevant technical standards.

Note: where the University has entered into an agreement to purchase and maintain an EWP for an external entity as part of a joint collaboration, all of the above requirements must be met by the University.

Note: A competent person is a person who has the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out the task, acquired through qualification, training or experience. The competent person overseeing the inspection should:

- have sufficient knowledge to oversee, where necessary, other competent persons undertaking related specialist work, understand their reports including whether they contain necessary information,
- have sufficient knowledge of the requirements for the model being inspected so that the inspection can be undertaken as required, and
- be aware of the relevant safety information including safety bulletins from the manufacturer. These should be incorporated into the inspection program.

2. Where the University leases and operates an EWP

The owner or leasing company should provide documentary evidence of the inspection and maintenance regime for the EWP before its use and can advise on the inspection and testing regime required of University users.

While the EWP is being used by the University, the School/Branch will be responsible for pre-operational inspections and functional verification of the EWP. These should be conducted at the beginning of each shift for obvious faults (anomalies) and to confirm the EWP's correct functioning of controls and travel limits. These inspections should also include detection of damage, tyre pressures, fluid levels and leaks.

Pre-operational inspections must be undertaken by a competent person familiar with the operation of the particular model of EWP, for instance the EWP's operator.

A list of typical items to be inspected during pre-operational inspections is included in Appendix A of the [Safe Work Australia guide](#). This is not an exhaustive list. The items to be inspected should be based on manufacturer's recommendations, or where not available on the recommendations of a competent person.

You must ensure that any safety issues identified through an inspection are rectified and the EWP is made safe before the EWP is used again.

3. Where the University engages contractors for an undertaking that involves the use of an EWP

The University must consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with contractors and subcontractors who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a health and safety matter. The School/Branch engaging the contractor must cooperate and coordinate activities, to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable. Refer to clauses 4.1, 9.1 and 9.2 of the [Contractor Safety Management Handbook Chapter](#).

This includes ensuring safe plant is used and maintained. The School/Branch must ensure these requirements are met even though the contractor also has a duty to do so.

The School/Branch may ensure the outcomes by not necessarily taking the required action themselves, but by making sure the contractor is doing so. The School/Branch should start consultation, cooperation and coordinating activities with the contractor when they become aware, they are or will be involved in work using an EWP.

The School/Branch should ensure inspections by the contractor are undertaken and that they are performed by a competent person.

For further enquiries in relation to this briefing, please contact [Central HSW Team](#)