

HSEQ Bulletin

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Wander Leading MEWPs

Brian Parker discusses Wander Leading with MEWPs.

The term 'wander leading' MEWPs refers to the operator stood on the ground but using the upper platform control to drive the MEWP while walking alongside the machine. This is also sometimes referred to as 'dog walking' but is essentially remote controlling the MEWP.



The decision to wander lead any MEWP should not be taken lightly. Why? You will nearly always be safer when stood in the platform driving the MEWP as you have protection in the form of guardrails around you. Your visibility is undoubtedly better and you are certainly less at risk from being crushed or trapped between the MEWP and any object or indeed running over yourself with your own MEWP.



Now you may believe that this rarely happens and when it does, it must have been the result of some poor decision making at the time by the operator, but this generally isn't the case. We are seeing an increasing amount of incidents from this method of driving the MEWP and statistics from the IPAF accident reporting database show that this happens more than we may have previously realised.

There are of course times when we do need to wander lead the machine, for example driving the machine through a narrow or low doorway, or negotiating a low overhead obstruction, in cases like these it would not be safe to remain on the MEWP platform with the guardrail in the lowered position.

If the decision has been made to drive a MEWP from outside the platform, then the following points MUST be considered;

- Has this task been covered as part of the risk assessment process?
- Could you avoid driving the MEWP from outside the platform?
- Do you need assistance? *Note: some machines are large and can obscure your view of the opposite side.*
- Can you minimise the time taken driving the MEWP outside the platform?

Brian Parker, our Business Development Manager, Technical Support, is the sub group Chairman of IPAF's 'Spread the Load' working group, which is working under the direction of the IPAF UKCC (UK Country Council).

He has now been tasked with updating the IPAF guidance to bring clarity and standardisation to the industry.

His work will also involve ensuring that the guidance also considers wheeled and tracked MEWPs.

Wander Leading MEWPs

- Are there any narrow gaps or entrances to pass through on route to your destination?
- Are there any overhead obstructions to pass under on route to your destination?
- Are there any busy traffic or pedestrian routes to pass through?
- Are there any sharp turns to make on the route which may increase the chances of becoming trapped or crushed?
- Is the lighting adequate on the route?
- Are the ground conditions suitable?
- Are you aware of your position in relation to the direction the machine is moving? i.e. orientation of the platform control box to the chassis
- Have you considered hydraulic ramping* into the task?

**Hydraulic and electrical ramping is built into the MEWP design by the MEWP manufacturer and may mean that the MEWP may not stop immediately when the controller is released.*

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