

Willmott Dixon introduces enhanced safety measures for workers using mobile elevating work platforms

3 years ago



Willmott Dixon is rolling out a new harness-based technology on its construction projects that will provide an even safer working environment for everyone using a boom type mobile elevating work platform (MEWP).

Incidents involving MEWPs, mast climbing work platforms and hoists continue to occur on construction sites each year, with [The IPAF Global Safety Report 2023](#) saying there were 759 reports in 2022 from 34 countries, which saw 831 people involved in incidents, resulting in 102 deaths. Falls from a mobile platform remain the most common cause of incidents resulting in major injury or death.

The 2021 version of the same report said that of the 132 fatalities using MEWPs, mast climbing work platforms and hoists, 35 per cent involved not wearing a harness. In the '3b/1b' MEWP categories, falls from height were responsible for over 55% of major or fatal injuries.

To tackle this as part of its safe working at height strategy for mobile platform operators, Willmott Dixon has teamed up with Nationwide Platforms, who have developed a system called Harness ON™.

This system works by requiring anyone operating a '3b' Boom type MEWP to wear a full body harness with a lanyard that connects to a specific intelligent anchor point within the MEWP's basket.

The *Harness ON*™ system prevents the MEWP basket controls from operating unless the operator's harness lanyard is correctly attached to the anchor point.

Harness ON™ is now mandatory, meaning that only '3b' MEWPs with the new system installed can operate on a Willmott Dixon project. This is to reduce to zero the chance that an operator using a MEWP could fall to the ground because they have not connected their harness correctly. Importantly, this device doesn't affect any ground or emergency lowering controls.

Chief health, safety & environment officer Mark French explains,

"The annual IPAF Global Safety Report continues to show the significant numbers of incidents involving people working at height using mobile platforms, mostly caused by falls. We strive to take a zero-tolerance approach to the risk of this happening and were delighted to work with Nationwide Platforms in getting its new *Harness ON™* system in use across all our projects.

"I think we are the first Tier One contractor to mandate this system across our business and supply chain. Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our supply chain team on our construction sites is paramount and this is an excellent new way for those who use MEWPs to carry out their work."

Rob Lowe, strategic account manager, Tier 1 Construction, at Nationwide Platforms continues,

"The *Harness ON™* device supports the operator in working safely by acting as a physical reminder for them to clip-on before using the platform. This is achieved by the intelligent anchor point disabling all controls inside the basket, until a recognised carabiner is connected to the anchor point..

"A bit like the audible alarm in cars reminding people to put a seat belt on, however this device actually takes action and restricts non-compliance."