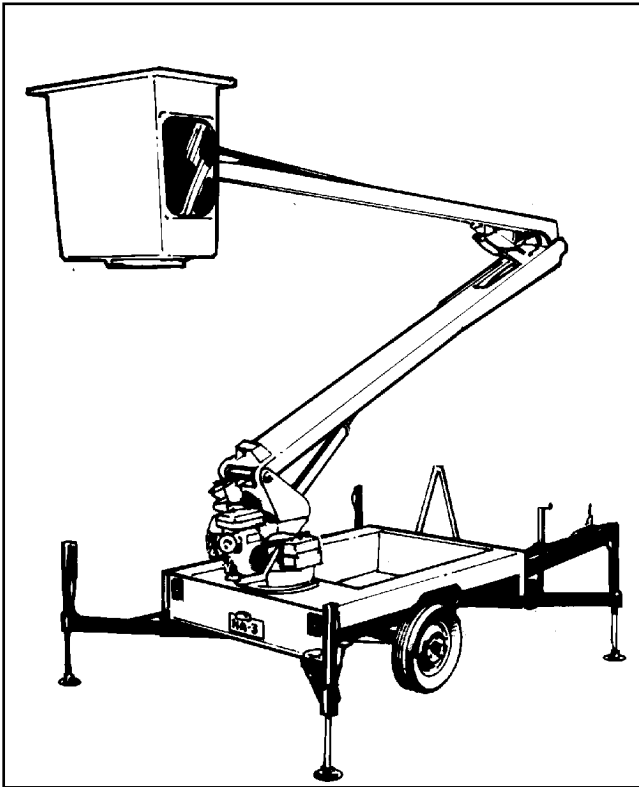


# N° 3: ELEVATED WORK PLATFORMS (EWPs)

April 1995



## 1. Background

The Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare Act (OHS&W Act) requires that employers provide safe systems of work for all employees. Self-employed persons are required to protect their own health and safety and avoid adversely affecting the health and safety of any other person(s).

In the past twelve months, two serious accidents involving Elevated Work Platforms (EWPs) have occurred where it has emerged that appropriate safety requirements had not been observed, possibly in the interest of speed to complete the job.

In the first incident a self-employed window cleaner received fatal injuries when he fell from the personnel box of an EWP. Investigations revealed he was not wearing a safety belt or harness prior to his fall.

In the second incident, a self-employed window cleaner received serious injuries when the EWP—also known as a Vertical Lift Platform (VLP)—on which he was working, collapsed. In this case the outriggers, supplied with the EWP for stability, had not been fitted, and in fact were found in a trailer parked at the scene.

The window cleaner was not wearing a harness or safety belt—this was found in the boot of his car.

In a more recent accident, two workers had to be rescued from an EWP by the Metropolitan Fire Service following a malfunction of the elevating boom. Fortunately there were no injuries in this case.

## 2. Introduction

An elevating work platform (EWP) is commonly used to raise and lower people to perform work at varying heights, eg. ETSA repairs to power lines, window cleaners and in fruit picking. They are often referred to as 'cherry pickers'. The operator/worker may independently control the height and reach of the EWP from within the personnel box.

Although EWPs may be rated in the high risk category, the use of safe practices will reduce the likelihood of accidents. Owing to their particular operation, risks can arise from:

- ★ Lack of training in proper use
- ★ No pre-planning for work to be carried out
- ★ Not using additional safety equipment
- ★ Over reaching by operators from personnel box
- ★ lack of suitable maintenance/repair etc.
- ★ use on unstable ground or in extreme weather conditions
- ★ operating too close to overhead power lines.

## 3. Prevention

The specifications for safe use of EWPs are contained in Australian Standard, AS 2550.10 – 1994 *Cranes—Safe use, Part 10: Elevating Work Platforms*. This Standard is concise, but has a wide range of information relating to both pre-operational and operational requirements. Particular attention is given to:

- ★ Responsibilities—Management/Operators
- ★ Pre-operation inspections
- ★ Use of safety equipment, eg. harnesses
- ★ Load carrying on EWPs
- ★ Working near overhead power lines (continued)

- ★ Access and egress
- ★ Use of outriggers
- ★ Working above personnel or use in public places
- ★ Weather and ground conditions
- ★ Maintenance, inspection and repair
- ★ Travelling and transportation.

### **Additional information**

Information concerning employer/employee or owner legal obligations relating to the Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare Act may be obtained from any Department for Industrial Affairs office as listed in Telecom's White Pages.

Enquiries can also be made to the new industry group association, Hire & Rental Association of Australia—SA Region Inc., Elevating Work Platform Division.

Additional reference information is contained in Australian Standard, AS 2550.1 – 1993 Cranes—*Safe use, Part 1 General requirements.*