



Safety alert 03/2011

Elevating work platform fatal accident

The purpose of this Safety Alert is to highlight the importance of identifying site hazards prior to operating an Elevating Work Platform.

Background

Two people were carrying out maintenance work from an elevating work platform. Both had completed the required training and held the appropriate high risk work licence.

The elevating work platform was being operated on a flat grassed area and the boom of the elevating work platform was extended to approximately 20 meters. While crossing the grassed area, the wheel of the elevating work platform travelled over a concealed septic tank. The concrete lid of the tank collapsed, causing the elevating work platform to abruptly lean to one side. The movement caused the telescopic boom to flex and the operator and co-worker fell out of the basket.

Both men were wearing harnesses at the time of the incident, however it is not clear if the operator had the harness connected to the anchor point located in the basket. The operator was killed and the operator's co-worker, who was clipped to the basket anchor point, had to be rescued by emergency services.

Contributing factors

- The elevated work platform was being operated off-road.
- Underground services had not been identified.
- The operator may not have secured the safety harness to an anchor point.

Action required

1. Consultation and planning of the proposed work must occur with all people involved in the work.
2. Hazard identification must be incorporated into a work plan and/or a safe work method statement that covers all potential risks associated with the work.
3. Underground service diagrams should be consulted prior to commencement of the work.
4. Training must be undertaken and a high risk work licence obtained for working on elevated work platforms.

Further information

- Elevated work platform manufacturers instructions/operators manual.
- Occupational Safety and Health Regulation 3.21.
- Australian Standard 2550.10 – 2006 *Safe use of mobile elevating work platforms*.
- Western Australian Commission for Occupational Safety and Health *Code of Practice – Prevention of falls at workplaces*.
- *Powered mobile plant – making it safe. A guide for employers, self employed persons and employees*

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email safety@commerce.wa.gov.au

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