



Health and Safety Bulletin No. 15

Hydraulic fluid contamination resulting in uncontrolled movement: elevating work platforms

Date: 1 March 2024

Background

WorkSafe is aware of recent incidents where hydraulic fluid contamination has resulted in the uncontrolled movement of the basket on elevating work platforms (EWPs). This includes the loss of performance related to platform level and jib function.

Hydraulic fluid contamination can occur from the use of incorrect oil, dirt entering the hydraulic system or metallic fragments in the hydraulic system due to wear or damage.

The maintenance environment, especially when servicing in the field, can cause an increased risk of contamination when the hydraulic system is open. Correct storage of hydraulic components is important to minimise the risk of contamination.

Contributory factors

- Contamination from dirt or foreign objects entering the hydraulic system when opened in a non-clean environment. These tasks may include replenishing the oil or changing components, such as hoses, in the field.
- As-manufactured debris present in the hydraulic system.
- Incorrect storage of hydraulic components, including open component packaging on shelves accumulating dust.

Actions required

- Ensure maintenance, repairs, inspection and testing of EWPs are carried out by competent persons in accordance with the manufacturer or supplier instructions and schedules.
- Conduct maintenance and repairs in a clean, dust free environment.
- Contact the manufacturer or supplier for any improvements or changes to the inspection and maintenance requirements.
- Store components indoors in a clean, dry area.
- Only remove component packaging just prior to fitting and leave hose caps on until necessary to remove.
- Ensure hydraulic hoses and components are free from contaminants prior to fitting.

Further information

Work Health and Safety Commission

- [Managing the risks of plant in the workplace](#): Code of practice