



Ground Floor, Helvetia House, Greenvale Road, Wilbart, 1401
PO Box 5177, Meadowdale, 1614
Telephone: +27 (0)11 450 1804
Facsimile: +27 (0)86 653 7600
E-mail: info@profbody.co.za (Professional Body)
E-mail: info@ifwh.co.za (Trade Association)
Company registration number: 2008/023831/08
Vat number: 4190266645

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GOOD PRACTICE NOTE

MEWP CHAMBER

IWH Information Circular 4 – Anchors on a MEWP

Background and introduction

Fall protection anchors are designed and tested to SANS 50795/EN 795. MEWP platforms are equipped with MEWP lanyard attachment points and these cannot be subjected to the rigors of EN 795 when it comes to testing, the requirement of which would be a 100kg test weight being dropped from the MEWP platform and a 600kg static load test.

MEWPs are specifically designed to lift people to work positions at height, thus the SANS (ISO) MEWP lanyard attachment test criteria of 136kg. So whilst MEWP lanyard attachment points do not comply with EN 795, provision for their testing and thus by definition their safe use has been contemplated in SANS (ISO) 16368.

The following excerpt is from SANS (ISO) 16368. Design, calculations, safety requirements and test methods. This is in reference to lanyard attachment point testing.

Dynamic fall arrest anchorage test

MEWPs designed for use with a fall arrest system shall successfully complete the following test;

- a) The MEWP shall, while positioned on a level surface, withstand the force of a free-falling 136 kg test mass, the origin of which has been placed so that its centre of gravity is 0,46 m outside of the top rail of the work platform in a direction that creates the most adverse stability condition, which is attached by a non-shock-absorbing lanyard to a lanyard anchorage point nearest the test mass origin, the lanyard having been passed over the top rail of the work platform such that the overturning force is applied to the rail, and falling a minimum vertical distance of 1.2m, without interference or obstruction and without hitting the floor/ground during the test.
- b) The MEWP shall be loaded to the most adverse stability condition during the test. The test mass and the platform load shall equal the maximum platform rating. The test shall be conducted with no platform load if this is the condition of least stability. Any platform load shall be evenly distributed on the platform.
- c) The MEWP shall not overturn as a result of this test. Permanent deformation of any part is acceptable, provided that the test mass is not released during the test.

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The following guidance is taken directly from the Institute's Working at Height Safely Guidelines book (available for a nominal fee upon request).

Use of a Safety Harness & Other PPE

- a) Decisions regarding fall prevention equipment selection must come from a job specific risk assessment performed before work starts, and must take into consideration all recommendations found in the manufacturer's instruction manual.
- b) Full body harnesses with short adjustable restraint lanyards are strongly recommended in all boom type platforms.
- c) If working over water it is sensible to exchange a full body harness for a personal flotation device.
- d) An operator should never attach a harness to any structure outside the platform, only attachment points as identified by the manufacturer in the platform should be used as a point of attachment / anchorage.
- e) Safety harnesses should be regularly inspected by a competent person and the information logged. They should also be inspected by the operator prior to use.
- f) The correct PPE should always be worn. These may include hard hat with chin strap, high visibility clothing, safety shoes, gloves and even eye protection. PPE should always be the final stage in the hierarchy of prevention measures. Potential operating risks can be significantly controlled by good planning and safe operating practices carried out by well-trained operators.

Recommendations

The IWH MEWP chamber makes the following recommendations:

- a) MEWP lanyard attachment points do not comply with SANS 50795/EN 795 and may not be used as general fall protection anchors.
- b) MEWP lanyard attachment points comply with SANS (ISO 16368) and may only be used for attaching the MEWP user's lanyard to.
- c) The manufacturer's recommendations and instructions must be adhered to at all times

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