

# MEWPs are safer and more productive: Study by major contractor

Research on the "Selection of Access Equipment" commissioned by UK-based Crown House Technologies, part of the Laing O'Rourke Group, has found mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) to be safer and more effective compared with other methods of working at height.

"Following our study we were able to provide evidence that MEWPs are safer, more productive, ergonomic and avoid unnecessary strain injury," said Gerry Mulholland, HSE leader at Crown House Technologies (CHT), speaking at the Europlatform conference in Milan, Italy. "MEWPs are also easier for site management to maintain the appropriate safe standards as there are fewer variables and fewer opportunities to make the wrong choice. General site opinion from our workforce is that MEWPs get the job done faster and more easily."

The findings were the result of a complete review of low level work at height procedures (up to 4.5 metres) for mechanical and electrical installation carried out by CHT in 2008. The research began with a

series of seven road shows attended by over 170 people across the UK where CHT asked their workforce, "What do you prefer to work from?"

Falls from height are the primary cause of serious injury in the construction industry. CHT's detailed review found that just under a fifth of all accidents on site are related to access equipment. A small proportion of these are caused by MEWPs (19%), compared with podiums, mobile towers, ladders and A-frames.

The study also looked at the cost of access-related accident claims, repair costs and loss and damage costs from a selection of projects, including: Heathrow Airport Terminal 5, the Royal Ascot Racecourse Grandstand, the Slough Treatment Works, the Arora Hotel at Heathrow Terminal 5, and the York Building, Marble Arch in London.



"MEWPs get the job done": Crown House Technologies' HSE Leader Gerry Mulholland speaking at the Europlatform conference (photo: Access International)

While the weekly hire rate for a MEWP is more expensive than other equipment, CHT expects to see fewer falls from height and fewer accident claims in the future. Reviewing the personal injury claims data, it found that over a two-and-a-half-year period, podiums accounted for 41 percent of claim costs while MEWPs were 11 percent.

CHT undertook a series of time and motion studies using different types of access equipment on two different projects. On average, MEWPs were

found to be three times more efficient than mobile towers and podiums.

"The findings have led us to eliminate the inconsistent use of access equipment and standardise the selection of this equipment," said Mulholland. "We have developed a matrix which is used to help select the most appropriate item of equipment for any typical M&E task we undertake, up to 4.5 metres working height, helping the user to select the right access equipment for the job."

## IPAF declares the WAHR a resounding success

IPAF has responded to the review of the Work at Height Regulations (WAHR), launched by the UK Parliament as part of post-implementation reviews of existing legislation.

"The regulations have been a major step in bringing about safer work places where work at height is carried out," said the federation in its written submission to the House of Lords select committee on the Merits of Statutory Instruments.

IPAF also called on the UK government to campaign for more even and wider implementation of the European Temporary Work at Height Directive 2001/45/EC, as British business is currently being placed at a competitive disadvantage.

"The UK has been at the forefront of the campaign to reduce deaths caused by temporary work at height," noted the federation. "However, this may have put the British economy at a disadvantage because the Temporary Work at Height Directive has not been implemented to the same degree in other EU member states. We call on the UK government to push for more consistent implementation of the Directive in other EU member states based on the experience in the UK. This should help to promote consistent enforcement by authorities and a level playing field for contractors quoting for work across various states."

## PDS draws another record turnout

This September's IPAF Professional Development Seminar (PDS) in Stoke-on-Trent attracted a record turnout of around 205 instructors and staff from IPAF-approved training centres.

"It was a wonderful event with a highly focused group of people," said IPAF managing director Tim Whiteman. "There was a high level of discussion and debate on issues regarding training." The event was rounded off by IPAF president John Ball, who congratulated the industry on creating a successful voluntary training programme.



IPAF instructors turned out in full force at the PDS

## Mark the date of the IPAF Summit and IAPAs

The next IPAF Summit and International Awards for Powered Access (IAPAs) will be held on 25 March 2010 in London. The venue is the Grange St. Paul's Hotel, Godliman Street, close to St. Paul's Cathedral in The City.

The deadline for submitting award entries is 31 December 2009. Details will be available shortly at [www.ipaf.org/iapa](http://www.ipaf.org/iapa)



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