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Report provides insight into platform accidents

Accidents while using powered access are proportionally more likely when working in public areas or alongside roads than on controlled work sites such as construction sites, commercial or rental premises, according to the latest detailed safety analysis from IPAF.



IPAF's Global MEWP Safety Report 2016-2018 presents findings from the federation's analysis of statistics gathered through its worldwide accident reporting project with input from 25 countries. The report is available at www.ipaf.org/accident

Accidents on construction sites account for the highest average number a year, but as aerial work platforms are used more widely in construction than other sectors, they are proportionally less likely to occur on a controlled work site than a remote location or a public area, such as alongside a road.

The report identifies recurring underlying causes of incidents including falls from the platform, electrocutions, entrapments, overturning and platforms struck by another vehicle. This is in line with previous years' analysis demonstrating again that the industry should focus on ways to reduce factors common to these types of incident.

The industries in which deaths are most frequent include forestry and construction, with maintenance and electrical service sectors third and fourth respectively. Both forestry and construction had an annual average of 19 reported fatalities, but the total number of platform days worked is far higher in construction than in forestry, so a fatal accident is proportionally more likely in forestry work.

Richard Whiting, IPAF general market manager UK & Ireland, says: "Renewed focus must be brought to bear to warn managers and operators of the higher proportional risks of a serious accident when not working on a controlled, segregated work site. IPAF's Street Smart safety campaign seeks to do this, we will look at evolving this to help reduce electrocutions or forestry accidents."

IPAF chief executive Peter Douglas adds: "Some people may be unaware of IPAF's reporting portal - www.ipaf.org/accident - while others may feel they will get into trouble if they report something. It is quick, simple and allows incidents to be logged with total anonymity."

Specific details such as names, location and machine brand are not required and users can sign in and report anonymously.



eLearning offers remote training solutions

Candidates seeking to renew or obtain PAL Cards to operate aerial work platforms or undertake specialist management training are advised to opt for online distance learning. IPAF will also temporarily extend expiring PAL Cards by 90 days for those who complete an eLearning module. It has also doubled the time between successfully completing the theory module via eLearning and taking the mandatory practical assessment to 90 days to allow training centres to safely manage demand during the coronavirus pandemic.

New applicants will not receive a PAL Card until completing the practical test, but any current PAL Card holder whose card is due to expire may have it extended under special measures. On successful completion of the online operator theory eLearning module, and until such time as a practical assessment can be safely undertaken, a PAL Card's validity may be extended by up to 90 days from the date on which completion of the online module is certified. IPAF will request that all employers and contractors requiring a valid PAL Card recognise the extensions, subject to their discretion.

Director of operations Giles Councill says: "We urge those wishing to undertake IPAF training, or renewing an existing qualification, to contact their nearest IPAF approved Training Centre to find out what eLearning options are available and where required schedule a practical assessment, helping our training providers manage demand."

"An operator training theory module can be conducted online anywhere, any time, on most devices and, provided that a practical assessment is completed within the 90 day period, the candidate will be issued their IPAF PAL Card in the usual way."

"It is possible to complete the MEWPs for Managers course entirely in eLearning, though it is still assigned through an IPAF training provider. We hope that the added flexibility will assist candidates in completing their training safely and conveniently in the face of ongoing constraints to restrict the spread of the Covid-19 disease."

"We accept the possibility that workers may struggle to find available training or renew an existing PAL Card and are asking the industry to support these temporary measures."

To find more information on IPAF training options and the temporary changes to extending PAL Cards see www.ipaf.org/training, use the online directory or searchable map function on the same area of the IPAF website to find your Training Centre.

