Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs) Fatality File

Worker Electrocuted While Operating MEWP Near Power Lines

In August 2023, a 33-year-old electrician in the United States tragically lost his life while using a JLG 340AJ Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) to replace exterior light fixtures at a rental equipment repair facility. While maneuvering the lift around the building's southwest corner, the elevated boom came into contact with a 12kV overhead power line. The resulting electrical current passed through the worker's body and the lift, leading to fatal injuries. Despite immediate efforts by facility workers to extinguish a fire on the lift and lower the basket, the worker was pronounced dead at the scene.

This incident underscores the critical importance of maintaining safe distances from overhead power lines when operating MEWPs. Operators must be thoroughly trained to recognize electrical hazards and adhere to established safety protocols, including conducting comprehensive site assessments and ensuring adequate clearance from energized lines.

Employers are responsible for implementing rigorous safety measures, providing appropriate training, and enforcing strict adherence to safety guidelines to prevent such tragedies. Regular equipment inspections and adherence to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations are essential components of a comprehensive safety program.

Source: Osha.gov