

Title: Working on Hydraulic Platforms

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PLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANUAL

1. Introduction

Hydraulic platforms are used to provide access for inspection work, investigations and testing of structures. For the majority of this work, platforms will be “hired in” from suitable contractors together with a competent operator although occasionally trailer type hydraulic platform may be used and operated by a competent person.

This safety code of practice provides guidance to staff who are required to work on hydraulic platforms and should be read in conjunction with CPE8 (Cranes and Craneage).

Additional useful information can be found in Work at Heights Regulations 2005 and associated HSE guidance.

2. Definitions

A competent person is someone who has received formal training in the operation of hydraulic platforms or who has extensive experience in this type of work and an understanding of the risks and relevant Health and Safety requirements and considerations.

3. Precautions

Before commencing work, the person using the equipment shall inspect the platform to check for obvious signs of misuse or neglect, e.g. significant hydraulic leaks, damage, corrosion or other deficiencies which could render the platform unsafe.

Protective clothing and equipment, e.g. helmets, insulated gloves and, where appropriate, safety harnesses, shall be worn at all times when the platform is in use. (Refer to CPA5 for detailed safety clothing and equipment guidance).

4. Mobile Platforms with Operators

Where mobile hydraulic platforms are hired in with an operator, staff should ensure that appropriate procedures are followed in the selection and vetting of contractors (see CPE9) and that drivers have a certificate of competency for the machine they are operating.

When working on site, the general principles outlined in the Code of Practice for Cranes shall be followed. In particular, the main hazards associated with crane operations are applicable:

- (i) the overturning of the platform or structural failure of one of its elements
- (ii) electrocution from overhead power lines
- (iii) trapping of people
- (iv) incorrect erection and dismantling procedures.

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Further guidance on the above is provided in the Environment & Economy Directorate Code of Practice CPE8 - Cranes and Craneage.

Staff using mobile platforms shall at all times comply with the instruction and safety procedures outlined by the operator. On no account should staff operate the platform unless they have been assessed as a competent person in accordance with Section 2 or are working under the direct instruction of the operator.

5. Trailer Mounted Platforms

For certain types of work a trailer type platform without an operator may be suitable. Where these types of platform are used staff should ensure that they have received sufficient training to satisfy the “competent person” requirements of this Code of Practice.

Care should be taken to ensure that the manufacturer’s instructions and operating procedures are available and followed at all times and that site specific hazards have been identified and a risk assessment completed.

Hazards may include:

- (i) Traffic
- (ii) Sloping and uneven sites
- (iii) Overhead cables (electricity, telecom, etc.)
- (iv) Weather conditions

On no account should a trailer mounted platform be moved whilst extended or with people on the platform.

6. Important Reminder

This Code of Practice is intended to give general guidance to staff required to work on hydraulic platforms. Specific hazards will be present at each individual site dependent upon the nature of the site, the work required and the equipment being used.

It is therefore important that staff working on hydraulic platforms:

- (i) Undertake a risk assessment for the work prior to commencement on site.
- (ii) Obtain full details of the equipment and procedures from the supplier/operator prior to commencement on site.
- (iii) Comply fully with the instructions issued by the operator/supplier.