

Always use spreader plates with outriggers

IPAF has launched a safety campaign calling for the proper assessment of ground conditions and the correct use of stabilisers, outriggers and spreader plates. IPAF's "Spread the load!" campaign is built around this simple and straightforward message:

Spreader plates should always be used with boom-type mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) when fully supported on their outriggers.

Spreader plates should be used with all other MEWPs that have outriggers unless a risk assessment indicates they are not necessary. Several campaign tools are available, including leaflets, posters, stickers

and a video. These resources can be viewed and downloaded at www.ipaf.org/spreaders

"MEWPs are generally very safe and stable," noted IPAF chief executive Tim Whiteman. "However, incorrect set-up can cause instability and lead to overturning. This is often the result of inadequate ground assessment, poor selection of spreader plates, or incorrect positioning of outriggers. The 'Spread the load!' campaign sets out to give clear and practical guidance on when and how to use spreader plates."



Instructors out in full force for PDS events

Instructors and staff from IPAF-approved training centres again turned out in strong numbers for IPAF's Professional Development Seminars (PDS). More than 100 instructors attended the PDS in Oxfordshire on 4th October while another 100 and more attended the PDS in Cumbria on 6th October.

The attendees heard excellent presentations by Health & Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors Jonathan Bohm and Joy Jones on human factors in MEWP operation. Presenting research on incident analysis, Bohm and Jones highlighted the need to understand the person/machine/task interface in order to mitigate the risk factors when using MEWPs in applications from painting and decorating to steel erection. The presentation concluded that "MEWPs are a good thing, but only if properly managed."

Other presentations included those from Snorkel's Mark Yarnold and Pop-Up's Nigel Woodger, both giving technical updates on their product lines.



IPAF instructors in the South gather at the Milton Hill House in Oxfordshire



HSE inspector Jonathan Bohm explaining human factors research and encouraging debate about training



Things are looking up: IPAF instructors at the Northern PDS in Cumbria.



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IPAF focus

The Europlatform conference ended with a panel discussion taking a lively selection of questions from the audience.

Attracting capital will challenge rental companies, says Appleton at Europlatform

The access rental industry faces a challenge to attract funding in the coming years, as capital remains scarce and investors look for moderate or low risk opportunities, said former Lavendon chief executive Kevin Appleton, while speaking at the Europlatform conference held on 13th September in Maastricht. He proposed that rental companies should use Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) as a measure, noting that banks were looking for ROCE levels of between three and seven percent, while equity finance expects between 10 and 25 percent.

"We need to recognise that companies that will attract capital will be those that can generate a superior return compared to just putting the money in a bank," said Appleton. He observed that the financial crisis was a result of "problems of the heart - greed - we have been stealing from the past and borrowing from the future."

He predicted that companies unable to achieve acceptable rates of return would be frozen out of the industry and that there would be opportunities to acquire distressed companies in the next three to four years.

The next Europlatform, jointly organised by Access International and IPAF, will take place on 20th September 2012 in Edinburgh, Scotland. Watch for details at www.europlatform.info

"Flexibility now is about how much you dispose of rather than how much you buy"; former Lavendon CEO Kevin Appleton



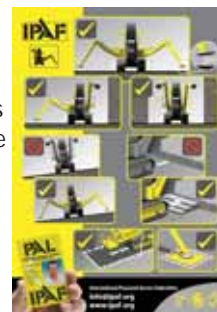
Safe spider travel

A new poster/leaflet illustration is available from IPAF that highlights a number of key safety points when moving and using tracked spider-type platforms, also known as atrium lifts. These machines tend to be narrow and could become unstable if proper attention is not given to the extension or retraction of the outriggers when travelling.

In short, IPAF's advice is:

- When moving the machine using tracks, on level ground and/or in the vicinity of walls or other vertical obstacles, use outriggers extended to within 10cm of their full deployment whenever possible.

- Outriggers must always be used in this way when travelling at an angle to an incline.
- Small obstructions such as kerbs or abrupt level changes must never be negotiated without using a ramp or other device to smooth out the step change.
- Use track mats or similar material to prevent damage to susceptible surfaces including grassed areas.
- Spreader plates must always be used under the outriggers when the platform is in use.



IPAF Ltd, Moss End Business Village Crooklands Cumbria LA7 7NU
Tel: 015395 66700 Fax: 015395 66084 www.ipaf.org info@ipaf.org
Offices in France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the USA.