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SAFE USE OF ELEVATED WORK PLATFORMS

Painters were recently observed by ACT Branch CFMEU officials working from an elevated work platform (EWP) at a block of flats in Braddon opposite Haig Park. The work method used was both dangerous and in breach of the Australian Standards.

To paint the interior walls on the balconies, the workers were exiting the bucket of the EWP when it was adjacent to the balconies and then stepping over the handrail from the bucket onto a ladder.

The Australian Standards are quite clear on the issue of when a worker can exit an EWP when it is at height and their use in Braddon meets none of the criteria.

Even more disturbingly, when this practice was reported to WorkCover, the CFMEU was informed that the practice had been approved by the inspector because the boss had conducted a 'risk assessment.'

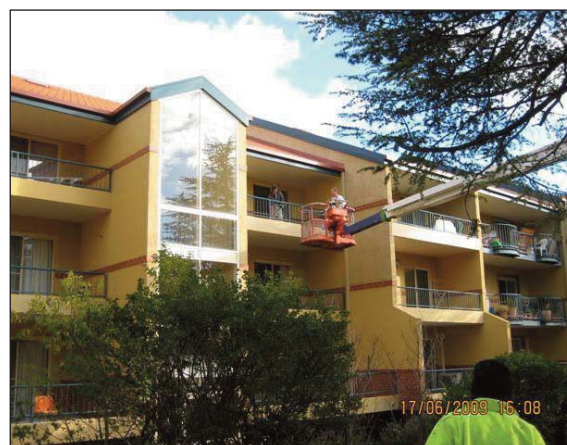
The role of a risk assessment is to identify hazards and implement appropriate controls. Standards, guidelines, codes of practice and manufacturers instructions are used to establish whether a work practice is safe or unsafe.

In this case, it would appear that WorkCover approved a work method that was manifestly unsafe and does not meet the Australian Standards.

The relevant Standard is 2550 'Cranes, Hoists and Winches', Part 10 'Mobile Elevating Work Platforms', Clause 5.9 is reproduced here:

Personnel shall not enter or leave the platform when elevated... unless each of the following conditions are met:

(a) Risk analysis shows that this means of access is safer than all other means of access





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(b) The structural adequacy of the landing area has been established and the landing area is clear

...

(e) The work platform floor is capable of being located within 300mm vertically of the landing

(f) Where the work platform is located over the landing, the landing point is not less than 2m from the edge of the structure, unless a safety harness is properly worn and attached to a suitable anchorage, where any potential fall is in excess of 2 m.



For further information or to speak to an Organiser, please contact the CFMEU ACT Branch on (02) 6267 1599.

Disclaimer: This material is provided as a guide only, if you are feeling ill at any time you should seek immediate medical attention.