

Technical Guidance Bulletin 03

Working Through Levels to Install Safety Netting for Metal Decking

The UKMDA recognise that there are increased risks associated with using MEWPs to work through multiple levels of steelwork. Due to these increased risks, the UKMDA Health, Safety & Technical Committee stipulate that safety netting can only be installed through one level of steelwork. It is therefore critical that clients /designers / principal contractors plan the phasing of the work correctly in line with their CDM Responsibilities.

When considering the installation of safety netting and metal decking through a level, a number of considerations must be taken into account, some of which are detailed within this Technical Guidance Bulletin

Ground Conditions

The ground must be clear of obstructions, materials and groundworks. It must also be able to support the weight of the machine being used.

Pack Locations

Decking packs should be positioned as per the working drawings to minimise the risk of the MEWP striking and potentially dislodging them.

Crushing

As with many MEWP operations, serious consideration must be given to the dangers of crushing when working under steelwork or other obstacles. The installation of safety nets requires a lot more movement of the MEWP than necessary in other trades such as steel erecting, hence the potential risks are increased.

MEWPs must be fitted with a secondary guarding system that is appropriate to the installation of safety nets.

Training and Competence

All operatives must have undertaken the PAL+ course for the category of MEWP they are using and be familiar with that particular machine prior to commencing works.



Figure 1. An example of unsuitable ground conditions



Figure 2. Packs positioned as per the working drawings allowing for safe Safety Net installation

Rescue

An appropriate rescue plan must be in place and an operative at ground level must be familiar with this and the controls of the MEWP so that the rescue plan can be executed safely. As safety net rigging must be carried out by a minimum of two people working together, the rigger at ground level must remain within the vicinity of the MEWP so as to be able to carry out the rescue plan if the need arises.

The difficulties related to conducting a rescue when working through multiple levels is one of the main reasons that this practice should not be permitted.

Other Hazards

Consideration must be given to the suitability of working in adverse weather conditions.

The sequencing of trades should be considered so that further avoidable obstructions such as handrails / edge protection are not unnecessarily put in place.

Further Reading

FASET Best Practice Guide: The Selection of Access Methods to Install and Dismantle Safety Netting. www.faset.org.uk/guidance/access-methods/