TRANSPOWER

SAFETY ALERT!

3 October 2016

Risk Assessment of Equipotential bonding

WHAT HAPPENED?

Recently at the Equipotential bonding roadshows the issue of bonding a MEWP (Mobile Elevated Work Platform) to the conductor was discussed.

It was brought to our attention that by bonding to the conductor we were contravening the Best Practice Guideline for MEWP and manufacturers guidelines which state you should not tether the machine to any fixed structure or wire, etc.

A risk assessment was conducted by representatives from Service Providers, Hirers of MEWP's and Transpower.

The assessment identified that, if workers forget to detach the bond, the risk of someone being catapulted out of, or tipping a MEWP due to it being tethered to the conductor, was greater than the risk posed by not bonding to the conductor.

This does not mean that the hazard / risk created by not bonding onto the conductor is acceptable.
There is work being completed for a breakaway bonding lead which will hopefully meet the requirements of all involved parties.

IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN

- Due to these conflicts a decision has been made that **all work being completed which requires a MEWP to be bonded to a conductor will not be undertaken** until a workable resolution can be reached.
- Continue to work on an engineering solution to this issue. One possible solution is pictured above.

ROOT CAUSE

The ACOP for MEWP's, and manufacturers guidelines state that you cannot tether to any fixed structure or a wire. This is in conflict to TP.SS 07.23 and SM-EI 3.601, which requires workers to be protected for all inadvertent livening situations, "Creation of an equipotential zone provides maximum protection to employees within it from possible electrical hazards from various sources." This would be achieved by attaching a bond to the MEWP.

LEARNINGS

- **Work to continue on an Engineering solution to this issue.**
- **Approach the Elevating Work Platform Association of NZ (EWPA) to see if we can promote a breakaway solution to resolve the conflicting requirements.**

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