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ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

Access Open Meeting

The first ever Strategic Forum Plant Safety Group (SFPSG) MEWPs Open Meeting held last month was attended by 60 delegates. The group has been in existence for several years to promote continued safe use and best practice in the operation of aerial work platforms, however this is the first time that an open meeting has been held. The group is chaired by the Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA) and administered and supported by IPAF.

CPA chief executive Kevin Minton worked alongside Richard Whiting, UK market general manager at IPAF, to devise an agenda with presentations on issues such as accident reporting, operator competence, card schemes, the importance of familiarisation, rescue of persons from platforms and secondary guarding, as well as offering plentiful opportunities for questions and audience interaction.

Andrew Delahunt, director of technical and safety at IPAF, was the first speaker reviewing accident statistics and fatalities involving aerial work platforms worldwide. In 2017 there were 83 known fatal accidents, based on the IPAF accident database. He stated that the 'shared knowledge' approach benefits all of the access industry. Accident data helps improve regulations and known risks can be targeted, thereby offering better protection for all. He also referred to a 2018 Summary Report produced by the UK Health & Safety Executive (HSE), which revealed that the rate of self-reported work-related ill health and a non-fatal injury was statistically higher in construction than other industries. A study of workplace statistics in 10 countries (Austria, Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Singapore, UK and USA) found that falls from height account for 20 to 30 percent of all fatal workplace accidents and that the top three causes of falls from height

are structures, roofs and ladders. HSE statistics reveal that there have been 200 fatalities and 28,000 injuries relating to falls from height in the UK over the past five years.

Delahunt finished his presentation by highlighting the importance of near miss reporting and identifying high risk situations before an accident occurs, then implementing safe working practices. More than 50 percent of reported accidents result in no injuries.

The next speaker - Peter Brown, technical development manager of the CPA - focused on card schemes and operator competence. He gave a potted history from 1986 when plant card schemes were first originated to the present day and the NOCN Group announced as the new owner of CPCS. A survey carried out among CPA members indicated that 95 percent of respondents use CPCS, 50 percent use NPORS and 35 percent use IPAF. The most important factor for using a named scheme was said that it is accepted on all sites.

CPA chief executive Kevin Minton then outlined the association's position regarding the change of ownership of CPCS. The CPA has had a long association with CPCS dating back to its origins in the Certificate of Training Achievement (CTA) scheme. He said the CPA wants to ensure that the investment CPA members have made in training and competence is protected. The



C&A

CPA

CPA has therefore offered support to NOCN to help achieve a successful and smooth transition from the public sector.

Next up was Ray Cooke from the HSE Construction Sector Safety Team. He presented a series of statistics relating to workplace injuries and stated that work at height remains the biggest cause of fatalities and that aerial work platforms often present the best and safest solution for working at height, providing that they are used in the right hands and that the correct planning is in place.

A further presentation by CPA technical consultant Tim Watson, was about the availability of a recently launched SFPSG publication called Rescue of Persons from MEWPs. Available as a free download from both the CPA and IPAF websites, it is a 10 page A4 document which has been drafted with input from the HSE. The

guidance confirms that the primary duty for ensuring there are adequate resources for planning and carrying out rescue of persons from a platform rests with the user. As well as covering regulatory requirements and responsibility for rescue, the document covers planning for rescue, developing the method and rescue personnel.

The final presentation by Delahunt covered secondary guarding. IPAF currently has two documents available - Avoiding Trapping Crushing Injuries to People in the Platform and Guidance on Secondary Guarding Devices Available to Reduce the Risk of Entrapment Injury.

The final session covered a series of questions that had been posed by attendees throughout the meeting using Slido, the web-based Q&A and polling platform for meetings and events.



Andrew Delahunt