

New standards can offer  
rental opportunities

By Paul Jensen



**T**he new American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the CSA Group, formerly Canadian Standards Association, standards are shaking up the mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) industry and anytime there's an industry shakeup, there's a chance to make an impact on the market.

Rental stores that train and prepare their staff and their customers will create a customer experience that will help them lead their local markets.

While MEWP manufacturers anticipate new training requirements as part of the upcoming standard, there will be

many training opportunities for store staff members that aren't part of the specific training standard.

For example, customer service staff will have to be trained on how to help customers select appropriate machines. Technical maintenance staff will have to be trained on how to work with the new machines as new features mean new maintenance and calibration procedures. Customers will need to be familiarized with machines, especially the new safety features, and may need to be fully trained in safe operation of the machines if they make the request.

The new ANSI A92.20 standard has been imminent for a long

time in the U.S., but the definitive version has not yet been announced, even though it is anticipated later this year. Canada announced its changes to CSA B354.6 last year and the standard became official in May of this year. This means that in Canada, manufacturers selling new stock must provide machines that are compliant with the new standard.

Even though the standard has been in effect in Canada for a while now, MEWP users still may not have come across an opportunity to use a newly compliant machine. The nationwide fleet still is primarily made up of older machines that do not require upgrades and manufacturers still may be selling stock that was built prior to the standard effective date. This means, for a time, there will be multiple machine generations in the market and that might lead to some confusion for machine operators.

Because newer machines will behave differently, there may be some frustration while users get used to the changes. Some safety features may cause operators to think the machine is broken or doesn't work as well as an older machine.

Rental stores likely will hear from some frustrated machine users calling to complain that the new machine isn't working the way the old one used to or that there are too many alarms stopping work. Well-trained customer service staff or technical support, however, can quickly identify that work is being done on a slope beyond the rated capacity of the machine or that the platform is being overloaded beyond the rated weight capacity. Some quick troubleshooting questions can resolve the call over the phone and prevent the need for a technical site visit to repair a machine that really is working properly.

Even these situations, however, can be avoided with some effective customer service training. Training staff to set proper expectations with machine users in advance can deter the phone call before it happens. Gone are the days of taking orders over the phone for a 60-ft. articulating boom without digging deeper and asking more questions.

Staff should be trained to consult closely with customers to understand how and where the machine will be used. A good understanding of the project requirements

and the environment where the work is located helps ensure the correct machine is delivered to the job site the first time.

To help with this, Haulotte U.S., Virginia Beach, Va., for example, has released Quick Positioning, an app available on Apple and Android devices, that will help rental stores and machine users choose the right machine based on access and project requirements. The app can be a good place to start when working to select the right machine.

## Training a customer to have a full understanding of the machine and how the safety features operate sets the stage for a more productive shift and prevents frustrated phone calls.

After the delivery and before leaving the site, customers should be familiarized with the machine, including safety features like tilt and load sense that will help avoid unneeded frustration during the work day. Training a customer to have a full understanding of the machine and how the safety features operate sets the stage for a more productive shift and prevents frustrated phone calls.

To prepare, rental stores need to have a fleet that matches their customer needs. Customers might be used to overloading the weight capacity of machines they rent, but new machines will not allow productive work in an overloaded state. In some cases, a customer just needs to take some weight out of the platform and continue working, but sometimes the project demands a higher weight capacity platform be available to perform productively.

Another example is the new wind load ratings. Some machines will be rated for

indoor and outdoor use, but some machines will be rated for indoor use only. It may seem like a clever idea to create a fleet of machines that are all rated for outdoor use, but this can lead to missed opportunities. Some projects will require indoor machines that have lower floor loading weights. An outdoor-rated machine might fit inside the building, where the work takes place, but exceed the floor loading requirements.

On the other hand, building a fleet of small indoor-only units mean missing out on outdoor maintenance projects where a shorter platform height may be appropriate, but the machine doesn't meet the stability requirements for work outside the building. Rental stores should take a good look at the project needs in their areas and make sure the fleet mix matches those needs.

Once rental staff members have consulted with the customer to understand the project and the environment to help choose the correct machine for the job, the newly required site safety plan is halfway complete. With a few more questions to the customer and some follow-up during the machine delivery, rental stores can make themselves even more valuable by helping with this important part of the new standard.

Helping customers identify machine risks, job risks and site risks, and supporting the training needed keeps workers safe and establishes the rental store as an expert that can be relied on for service and safety. ♦

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**Click here to learn more about the new ANSI standards and how manufacturers are helping rental stores prepare to comply and educate rental customers.**