

Safe Work Instruction Portable Pole Platforms		Issue date: 26/08/09 Review date: 26/08/12	
Document no. SMS-06-SW-0263	Work description Selection, use and care of portable pole platforms. Portable pole platforms are used to provide safe footing where workers can stand while up a pole. They are a work positioning method of working at heights		
	Scope Applies to the selection and use of portable pole platforms throughout RailCorp.		
Review date 26/08/12	References OHS Reg 2001 Clause 39, 56-61 AS 1891 Industrial fall arrest systems and harnesses AS/NZS 4488 - Industrial rope access systems SMS-06-GD-0230 Electrical Safety SMS-06-GD-0240 Working at Heights SMS-06-GD-0241 Fall Arrest Systems SMS-06-SW-0260 Fall Arrest Systems (Pole Straps) SMS-06-SWI-0264 Portable Ladders, Step Ladders and Step Platforms		
Responsible supervisor <i>Insert name in BLOCK letters</i>	PPE and precautions	Competencies or qualifications	Licences or permits required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full body fall arrest harness • High vis vest where required • Helmet with chin strap, where required • Non-slip footwear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical qualifications as required • See below for pole platform use competencies 	N/A
Tools and equipment required See below			
IF CONTROL MEASURES ARE NOT SUITABLE AND MAJOR CHANGES ARE NEEDED, CONDUCT A RISK ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOP NEW CONTROLS ACCORDING TO SMS-06-PR-0104 WORKPLACE RISK MANAGEMENT.			
Procurement	When procuring pole platforms specify compliance to the above and inspect them on delivery for compliance. They are to be delivered with manufacturers instructions.		
Select portable pole platforms	Portable pole platforms are supplied in different sizes, all with the same basic method of attachment. Review the situation of the employee. If it is a straightforward climb and work position, a single strap provides necessary safety. Select a harness that has a buttock strap to provide the necessary comfort. If the employee needs to pass any obstruction, such as a crossarm, an additional method of attachment is to be provided to enable the employee to pass the obstruction without complete disconnection from the pole. If the employee uses cutting implements, such as an axe or chain saw, the pole strap is to be wire reinforced to provide protection in the event the strap is inadvertently cut. Wire reinforced straps are electrically conductive.		
	Duty rating	Pole platforms are to have an appropriate load rating.	
	Length	The task to be performed is to be analysed and the length of pole platform necessary to allow the worker to reach the task determined.	
	Non-slip surface	Pole platforms are to have a non-slip standing surface.	
	Insulating properties	Platform decks are to be made from electrically non-conductive materials such as timber or fibreglass. Metal fasteners are to be recessed and covered with insulating material. Platforms for live low voltage work on conductive poles are to also incorporate a nonconductive "toe-board" at the inner end designed to prevent contact with the pole or conductive parts.	
	Markings	Pole platforms are to be marked with: the manufacturer's name, trade name or trade mark or other identification the safe working load any special instructions.	
	Hazards	The primary hazards associated with portable pole platforms are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • falls due to the worker overbalancing • falls due to the worker slipping off the platform • failure of the pole platform • incorrect setting up of the pole platform. 	

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Controls – general	<p>Overbalancing is to be controlled by using an appropriate work position and fall arrest system.</p> <p>A pole is to be inspected to make sure of its soundness before it is climbed.</p> <p>The point at which the pole platform is to be attached is to also be inspected to make sure that it is sound and free from decay that may cause the pole platform to become unstable once attached.</p> <p>Potential failures of pole platforms are controlled by regular and pre-use inspections.</p> <p>People are to be trained in the setting up of pole platforms.</p>
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Set up portable pole platforms	<p>Attach a safety rope to the platform and lay the platform on the ground.</p> <p>Put on the appropriate safety harness and pole straps, sling the pole straps over the shoulder to allow proper climbing.</p> <p>Clip the safety rope attached to the platform to the safety harness, leaving sufficient rope to allow you to reach the point where the platform is to be attached.</p> <p>Climb to the required height so the point where the safety platform is to be attached is at around your waist level.</p> <p>Lay a pole strap around the pole and clip it to the safety harness.</p> <p>Haul the rope attached to the pole platform and raise the platform to waist level. Tie off the rope on a convenient anchorage above the point where it is to be attached.</p> <p>Make sure that the pole platform is the correct side up (the chain and chain connection points are on the top of the platform).</p> <p>Hold the platform against the pole and lay the platform chain around the pole and bring back to the front.</p> <p>Lay the inside edge of the platform against the pole, holding the platform pointing slightly upwards.</p> <p>Clip a link of the chain into the chain grab point on the platform.</p> <p>Let the weight of the platform be taken by the captive chain. In its correct position the platform rests pointing slightly upwards.</p> <p>Test the proper positioning of the platform by leaning your weight onto it. The platform should remain pointing slightly upwards or even horizontal.</p> <p>Remove the rope from the platform and tie off to the pole for later use.</p> <p>Climb onto the platform and adjust the pole strap to provide proper safety (see Figure 1).</p>
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Use pole platforms	<p>Portable pole platforms are to be raised and lowered on a rope.</p> <p>The raising rope is not to be detached until the pole platform has been secured to the pole.</p> <p>The pole platform is to not be detached from the pole until the lowering rope has been attached.</p> <p>When positioning the pole platform on the pole, the platform should slope upwards away from the pole and should be level on the other axis.</p> <p>Once "bedded in" the platform should continue to slope upwards away from the pole, although to a lesser degree.</p> <p>Make sure that the chain is tight and unobstructed before the user's weight is transferred to the platform.</p>	
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Figure 1 **Pole platform installed**

Dismantle portable pole platforms	<p>On completion of the work, remove the platform and descend as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • step off the platform onto the ladder or steps • remove the rope from the tie off position and attach it to the pole platform • lift the front of the platform to remove the strain from the chain and disconnect the chain from the chain grab • carefully lower the platform to the ground and clip the rope to your harness • descend from the pole by reversing the ascent process.
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Pole work – side D rings	<p>Side D-rings are not to be loaded in a way which causes the associated webbing to be folded back on itself and the load applied directly to the stitching.</p> <p>In work positioning applications, body load is to be applied equally to both D-rings. Body weight is to not be supported from a single D-ring.</p> <p>If it is necessary to work facing away from a pole while standing on a pole platform and secured using a line worker's body belt and pole strap, the belt is to be re-positioned (reversed) on the waist so that the D-ring remain facing towards the pole. (Figure 2)</p> <p>If the same positioning is necessary while a harness is being used, no attempt is to be made to reverse the harness. The pole strap is to be crossed in front of the body to make sure that the D-rings are correctly loaded.</p> <p>That is, the strap is to be led from the left D-ring, across the front of the body, past the right side, around the pole, past the left side and attached to the right D-ring. (Figure 3)</p>
	 
	<p>Figure 2 Worker facing away from pole with belt re-positioned</p> <p>Figure 3 Worker wearing correctly repositioned harness</p>

Inspection and maintenance	Refer to the Fall Arrest Systems (Inspection and Maintenance) SWI .
Cleaning and storage	<p>Water is usually sufficient to remove mud and dirt from a pole platform. If the pole platform becomes contaminated with oil, use a detergent taking care to make sure that the detergent doesn't damage the pole platform.</p> <p>After cleaning, lightly oil the chain to prevent rusting.</p> <p>Store pole platforms out of the weather as extended exposure to water damages the pole platform's plywood deck.</p>
Training	<p>Before working at heights, RailCorp employees and contractors are to be properly trained in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the method of working at heights to be used • an understanding of the particular task requirements and any hazards and risks involved • correct selection, fitting, use, care and storage of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fall prevention systems and arrest equipment - personal protective equipment - tools and equipment to be used • procedures in the event of an emergency such as rescue, accident or injury. <p>Users of fall arrest systems and equipment are to be trained and assessed as competent before being allowed to work without direct supervision in accordance with training requirements defined in the Working at Heights guide.</p> <p>Line Managers are to make sure that employees are properly trained and possess the above competency.</p>
Additional controls	