

New “Best Practices” Resource for AWP Operators

By Jeff Stachowiak, *National Safety Training Director, Sunbelt Rentals*

Starting in March 2009, the American Rental Association (ARA), the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM), Associated Equipment Distributors (AED), the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF), the Scaffold Industry Association (SIA) and representatives from several equipment rental companies joined forces to devise a communication strategy for the essential safety training required to reduce unnecessary accidents on aerial work platform (AWP) equipment. Charles Snyder, Sunbelt Rentals’ Executive Vice President of Fleet Operations, and Jeff Stachowiak, Sunbelt’s Director of Safety Training and chairperson of the Aerial Platform Council of the SIA, both worked with the group throughout the process.

Discussions resulted in the recently released *Statement of Best Practices of General Training and Familiarization for Aerial Work Platform Equipment*, a resource for both employers (users) and workers (operators). The *Best Practices* document explains what the ANSI and OSHA standards require for proper training and how “familiarization” is defined on AWP.

The common goal of reducing workplace injuries united the different parties to work together and examine the regulations and requirements that require training and who is responsible for training and familiarization. The committee that worked to put the *Best Practices* document together was motivated by a concern that AWP users and operators may not fully understand the important safety training requirements for keeping AWP users and operators free from harm. Training should not be a one-hour video that someone watches before going to work. Recommended AWP training is typically four to six hours or more with hands-on evaluation on the equipment. Familiarization helps the “trained” operator understand the controls of the lift he or she is taking delivery of to operate for the work at hand.

For more information:

Free download of the *Best Practices* document: www.scaffold.org/UserFiles/file/AWP_FINAL2.pdf

SIA News Brief: <http://scaffold.org/Content.asp?ID=2&newsID=94>

Information on AWP safety training offered by Sunbelt Rentals: www.sunbeltrentals.com/safety