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September-October 2019

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State of the Industry: Is Rental Ready for A92?

By Karen M. Scally

The year is turning the corner into the home stretch.

As 2019 winds down, we are nearing the time the new ANSI A92 standards are set to go into effect.

Lift and Access talked to several U.S. rental companies to see how prepared they are for compliance and how they are helping their customers get ready as well. Here are their insights:

Sunbelt Rentals

Jeff Stachowiak, director of safety training

We will be doing webinars internally at Sunbelt then externally to our customers. One webinar will be oriented for general sales, and the other will be more technical for service technicians.

Our attitude when we answer questions or concerns about the design changes for MEWPs has a big influence on the customer. There may



▲ Sunbelt Rentals is one of the largest equipment rental companies in North America, with more than 825 locations.

be customers who will not like the load sensing on the new lifts. How we approach that with the customer will determine the ultimate outcome of that complaint. For example, if a tech comes out to a site about a complaint on a new A92.20-designed MEWP and says “yeah, these things have been a problem” — we lose. We need to have positivity around the changes.

One common misconception we’re hearing from our customers is that some manufacturers are leading our customers to believe that everyone needs retraining. We do not feel that is accurate; additional training is a better way to say it or additional familiarization upon delivery.

While I think the larger rental company players have some idea about the changes that are coming, it’ll be a gradual change for the industry as a whole over the next eight or more years.

One thing that would help with A92 implementation is we hope the OEMs somehow identify A92.20 MEWPs in an obvious way. We hope the OEMs deliver written guidance we can use for the familiarization process.

Chet’s Rent-All

Dan Munoz, safety director and Novi, Michigan, store manager

We are currently working to understand the new ANSI standards from a rental company perspective with help from the following organizations: the Scaffold and Access Industry Association (SAIA), the ARA, manufacturers, and other rental companies.

What we are learning is that most users are not even aware of the ANSI standards and therefore are not aware of their user/employer responsibilities regarding MEWPs. Our recommendation is to do your homework and make sure you fully understand the ANSI standards related



▲ Chet’s Rent-All is a family-owned rental company with eight locations across Metro Detroit.

to MEWPs.

It would be very helpful if ANSI would have a dedicated website providing FAQs and relevant forms and documentation. One helpful resource is www.saiaonline.org/a92 for updates and to get the new ANSI/SAIA A92.22 and A92.24 standards, as well as the updated Manual of Responsibilities.

In addition, at Chet’s Rent-All, we are updating and implementing the following:

- Lift delivery and training documentation that all customers must sign acknowledging familiarization
- Annual inspection dates on the MEWP
- Continued training for our employees
- Risk assessment of all store locations
- Record keeping of training, familiarization, and service of the MEWP

Service One Access

Tom Trinen, president

Since Service One primarily serves the niche aerial rental markets with compact boom lifts, which are lithium or electric/battery-powered equipment that already have load sensing and anti-crushing features, we don’t have to upgrade our fleet.



▲ *Service One Access, based in Chicago, rents and sells equipment, along with offering façade maintenance and window cleaning services.*

From a safety and training standpoint, our company is unique in the sense that we have our “rental division,” which rents and sells equipment, as well as a separate entity that logs thousands of hours annually as a “user,” utilizing MEWPs in our façade maintenance and window cleaning divisions.

We have updated our training processes to make sure all the operators have been retrained to understand the ANSI A92 changes, as well as the supervisors and project managers that are ultimately responsible for creating and following the safe work plans and enforcing the fall protection and work-at-height best practices.

Another area of change is documentation offering rental clients training, familiarization, or their declining of either of these important necessities, and thus exercising their option to “self-familiarize” their users. We also updated our predelivery inspection process and recordkeeping

forms, which has been a challenge due to general resistance to change.

Although the new standard clearly separates responsibilities of owner and user/operator, when we are surveying a jobsite and performing a job hazard analysis to create a site-specific safety plan, it begins with the proper selection of the MEWP. We have seen an increase in clients that want us to assist not only with selecting the proper MEWP, but also providing the resources, specifications, and inspection criteria they need for their comprehensive safe work plan.

Many of the larger general contractors and subcontractors are more than aware of the new provisions the standard imposes. These clients are demanding that any machines on their projects meet the new standard (regardless of the grandfather clauses or the fact that they have not yet taken effect).

All stakeholders should own a copy of the standards and train their teams to understand and follow it. The Manual of Responsibilities for Safe Use and Training does a pretty good job of defining the responsibilities of each entity, although it can appear a bit daunting in its layout.

Able Equipment Rental **Dave Mansbart, lead trainer** **and product specialist**

Being a rental house, Able Equipment Rental is in a unique position. Not only are we going out

and training the user’s operators and supervisors for our customers, we are also considered a user. We must train our drivers, mechanics, and staff to the new standard.

Personally, I believe we are ahead of the curve. All our employees will be trained by the middle of September. From my perspective, most of the rental industry is aware of the changes, but some are more prepared than others. The construction industry seems to be less prepared. Some companies are putting training in place, while others haven’t addressed it yet. This is true for both large and small companies. There is also a huge gap in knowledge with companies who own MEWPs both inside and outside the construction industry.

The MEWP manufacturers have provided a wealth of information, and users should rely on the rental house they deal with. In most cases, they will be the ones to provide the training. For example, Able currently has eight certified trainers, and we will be adding another eight by the end of August. We are building our training staff in anticipation of the spike in demand.

I think the most important step rental companies can do is to create a dedicated training department. The majors have done that. We have followed suit as many other regional rental houses have done. Rental companies (like Able) are here to educate and support the industries we serve. LA



▲ *Family-owned Able Equipment Rental serves the New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland region with its locations.*