



Government
of South Australia

SafeWork SA

Mobile Elevating Work Platform Campaign Report

2020

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Executive summary

Between 6 July 2020 and 30 October 2020, SafeWork SA undertook a second compliance campaign focused on Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) with a work platform height greater than 3 metres (compliance campaign).

The compliance campaign followed a recommendation arising from the SafeWork SA [Elevating Work Platforms 2019 Audit Report](#) (Audit Report), that addressed the findings of the Coroner's Inquest following the death of Castillo-Riffo (Coroner's Inquest).

A [MEWPs Guideline](#) was developed by SafeWork SA prior to the compliance campaign to assist industry understand the identified hazards and risks associated with MEWPs and the essential role of ground support personnel. The MEWPs guideline was distributed widely throughout the campaign to Persons Conducting Businesses and Undertakings (PCBUs), employees and workers.

SafeWork SA conducted 521 site visits and 256 compliance audits during the compliance campaign. The compliance audits were performed at various workplaces and EWP hire supplier sites.

79 statutory notices were issued in response to non-compliance, consisting of 67 improvement notices and 12 prohibition notices.

The largest areas of non-compliance related to insufficiency of information, training, instruction and supervision to operators, ground support personnel and having inadequate or no safe work method statements (SWMS) 'for high risk construction work' when operating an MEWP. The industry that received the highest number of statutory notices for non-compliance was construction (57) consisting of 47 improvement and 10 prohibition notices. The construction industry was not severely impacted during COVID-19 and was the most visited industry due to the large number of MEWPs at workplaces.

The majority of MEWP audits were announced to the PCBU due to the COVID-19 measures in place. However, a small number of audits were conducted reactively, for example where an inspector observed a risk to health and safety whilst driving past a workplace.

The 2019 and 2020 MEWP campaigns identified a:

- 9% decrease in statutory notices issued for SWMS; and
- 33% increase of statutory notices issued for lack of information, training instruction and supervision in the use of an MEWP.

It is recommended that SafeWork SA:

- continue to provide information and educational material, including the [mobile elevating work platforms guideline](#) to PCBUs.
- communicate the outcome of the campaign to internal and external stakeholders.

Background

In 2014 and 2016, two workers received fatal crush injuries while operating MEWPs at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital construction site. In October 2018, a critical incident occurred involving an MEWP, where a worker received an electric shock resulting in extensive injuries after the MEWP contacted 11,000-volt overhead power lines.

In November 2018, the State Coroner, Mr Mark Johns, released his findings regarding the Coronial Inquest into the 2014 fatal incident involving Mr Jorge Castillo-Riffo. As part of his findings, the Coroner made a number of recommendations relating to MEWPs including the use of 'spotters' to SafeWork SA and the Government.

In response to the Coroner's recommendations, the Executive Director, SafeWork SA approved the commencement of a six-month multi-industry audit of MEWPs ('boom' and 'scissor' type).

In 2019, SafeWork SA conducted 336 site visits and 261 compliance audits. These audits comprised of 234 MEWP audits and 27 system only audits (for MEWP hire suppliers).

87 statutory notices were issued in response to non-compliance, including 66 improvement notices and 21 prohibition notices. The largest areas of non-compliance related to missing or inadequate SWMS, MEWP maintenance, inspections and log book use, and the provision of information, instruction and training relating to the use of MEWPs.

A recommendation from the [2019 MEWP campaign](#) was for SafeWork SA to undertake a follow-up proactive campaign to assess compliance has been maintained or improved.

Following the proactive campaign a booklet was developed '[Mobile Elevating Work Platforms Guideline](#)' to provide educational guidance material on the safe use of MEWPs. This guidance material references the use of ground support personnel, which addresses the recommendation from the Coroner about the use of 'spotters'.

Introduction

The use of MEWPs to control the risks posed by working at heights is prevalent in many industries in South Australia and nationally. However, while the introduction of mobile plant can reduce risk factors, it can also present new ones. Specifically, there is an increased risk of crush injury to workers operating from within an MEWP workbasket.

Several factors need to be considered when operating an MEWP, including (but not limited to):

- the suitability of the MEWP for the task
- whether the work is 'high risk construction work' and requires a SWMS
- MEWP positioning and stability

- whether operators have been trained and/or require a high risk work licence
- pre-operational checks and ongoing maintenance requirements
- MEWP controls and familiarisation with different makes and models
- ground support personnel
- safe working loads and conditions
- correct use of harnesses and emergency and rescue procedures are in place public safety and working in public places
- risk of collision with other persons, plant or structures (including power lines)

SafeWork SA regulates compliance with *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)* (the Act) and can require Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) to rectify safety breaches through the issuing of statutory notices.

2020 MEWP campaign

Scope

To identify whether compliance has been maintained, ground support personnel are being utilised and that businesses and operators understand their responsibility in ensuring their own safety and the safety of co-workers.

The audits focused on:

- the provision of safety information to MEWP operators
- the adequacy of maintenance and pre-operational check records
- the use of competent and, where necessary, licensed operators
- the provision, use and maintenance of safety equipment and administrative controls
- the condition of the MEWP and operational controls
- the fitting and use of operational warning devices
- the use of ground support personnel
- safe systems of work and documented safety procedures
- emergency systems and training
- provision of information, training and instruction to MEWP operators.

As part of the campaign, Inspectors provided each PCBU visited with the [MEWPs Guideline](#). The MEWPs Guideline provides educational guidance material on the safe use of MEWPs.

The MEWP guidance material contains information on:

- PCBU duties
- worker duties
- safe work practices when using MEWPs
- controlling risks
- minimum standards of training
- planning the work
- maintenance and repair
- ground support personnel.

The MEWP guidance material also contains a [checklist for worker training](#) on:

- plant identification
- hazard identification and control
- safe general use
- pre and post-start inspections
- showdown and post-use inspections.

SafeWork SA addressed all identified non-compliance by issuing statutory notices.

The objective of the compliance campaign was to achieve compliance with the Act for MEWPs, educate PCBUs and MEWP operators on secondary guarding options and their Work, Health and Safety (WHS) obligations.

Industry Audits 2020

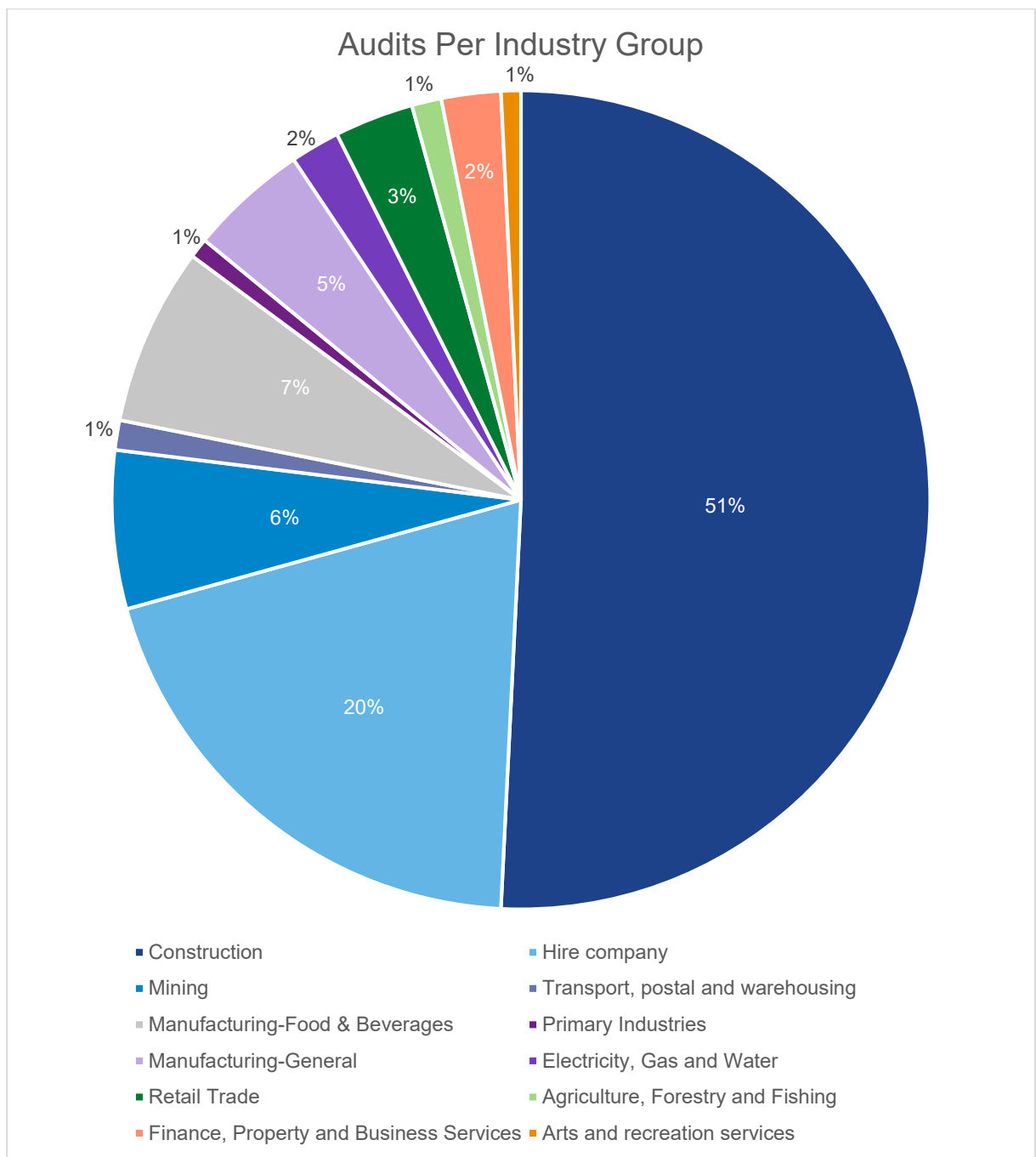
SafeWork SA conducted 521 site visits and 256 compliance audits. The compliance audits were performed at workplaces and hire supplier sites.

The majority of the audits were conducted across two industries:

- Construction, 130 audits (51%)
- Plant Hire Suppliers, 51 audits (20%)

All industries audited are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Audits per Industry



PCBUs in the construction industry included commercial and residential builders, painters, civil construction, glaziers, roofers, scaffolders, fire protection, gyprock finishers, sign installers and riggers.

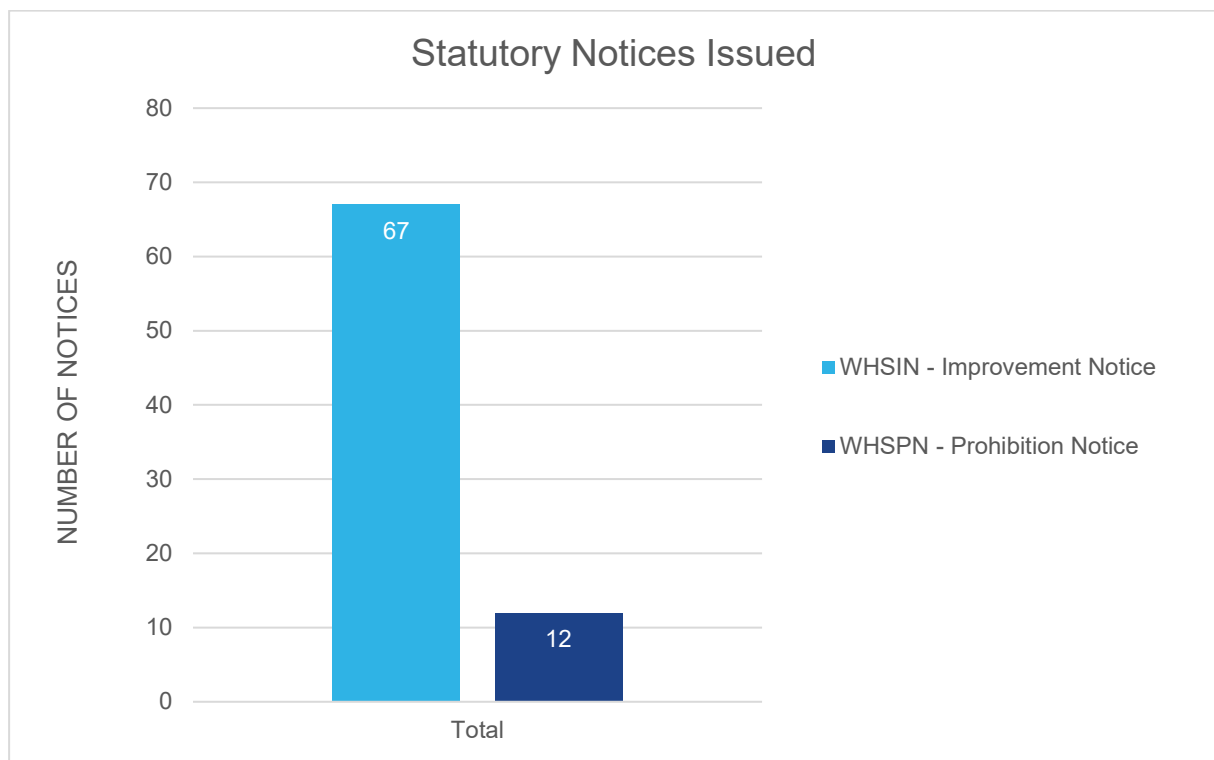
All plant hire supplier audits included a system and MEWP audit.

The system audits targeted:

- safety obligations when hiring an MEWP
- safety systems for handover
- confirmation of licence requirements
- the use of MEWP for specific tasks
- whether the MEWP maintenance and inspection records were in line with the manufacturer's recommendations and the *Mobile Elevating Work Platforms Australian Standards 2550.10: Cranes, hoists and winches – Safe use. Part 10: Mobile elevating work platforms.*

Statutory Notices

Figure 2: Statutory Notices issued



SafeWork SA issued 79 statutory notices in response to non-compliance, including 67 improvement notices and 12 prohibition notices.

Figure 3 shows the reasons the statutory notices were issued.

Figure 3: Reasons for Statutory Notices

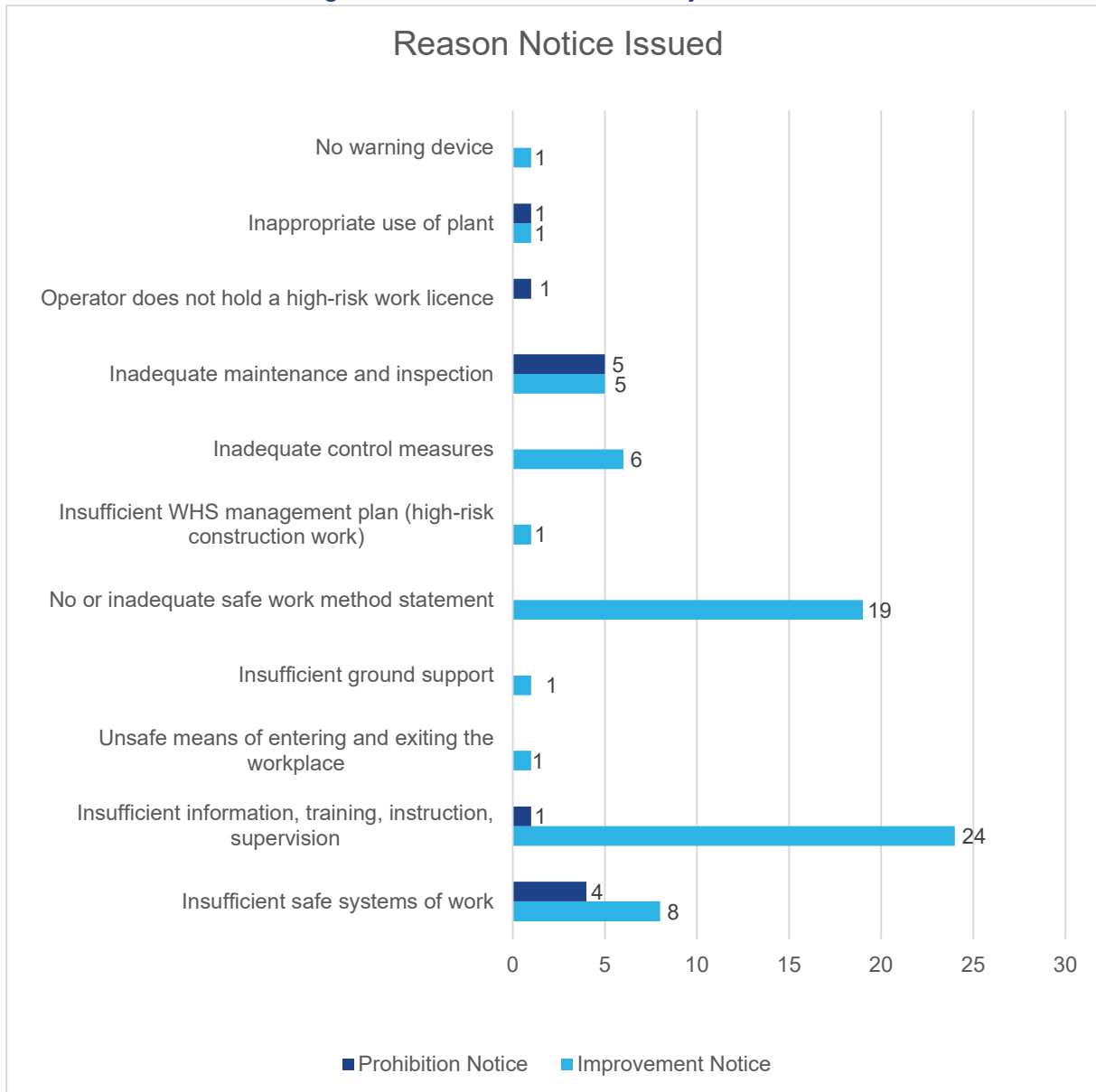
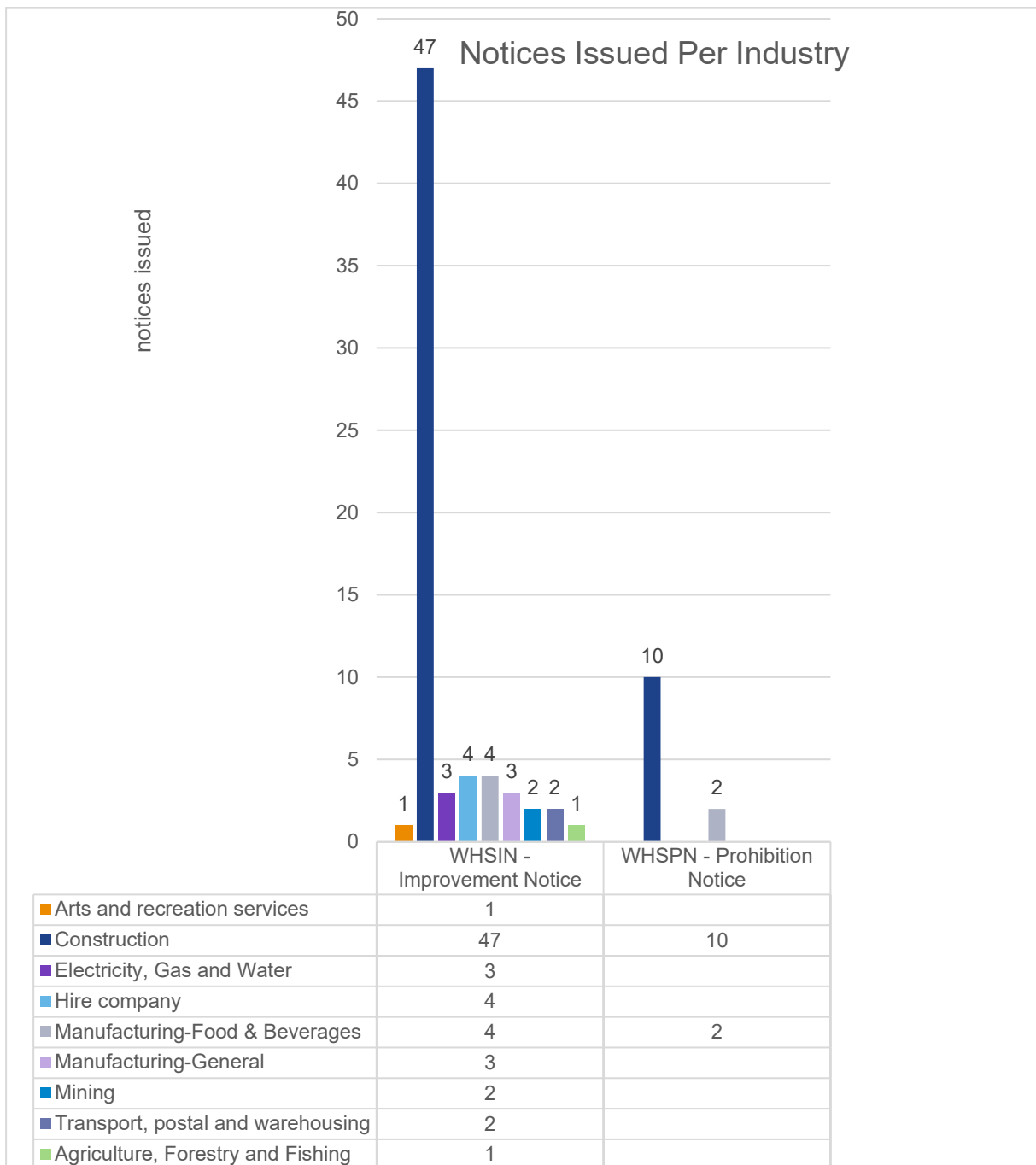


Figure 4: Statutory Notices issued per Industry



Under the Act, Inspectors are required to detail their reasons for issuing an improvement or prohibition notice.

Trends

Overall, statutory notices relating to MEWP use focused on two main areas:

- Insufficient information, training, instruction and supervision
- SWMS

Most Statutory Notices were issued for insufficient information, training, instruction and supervision given to the operator of the MEWP (i.e. verification of competency) specific to the MEWP model in use at the workplace. Additionally ground support personnel were not familiar with the emergency descent controls and were not able to demonstrate the lowering of the MEWP.

Statutory notices issued for SWMS were in the construction industry for HRCW where workers failed to adequately identify the hazards, risks and control measures associated with the use of MEWPs.

One PCBU failed to sight written confirmation that the operator held the relevant high risk work licence when operating a boom-type elevating work platform where the length of the boom is 11 metres or more.

Construction

25 statutory notices issued for SWMS related to:

- not identifying high risk construction work activities being undertaken; and
- failing to adequately identify the hazards, risks and control measures associated with the use of MEWPs.

14 statutory notices issued for no or insufficient information, training, instruction in the use of the specific type of MEWP.

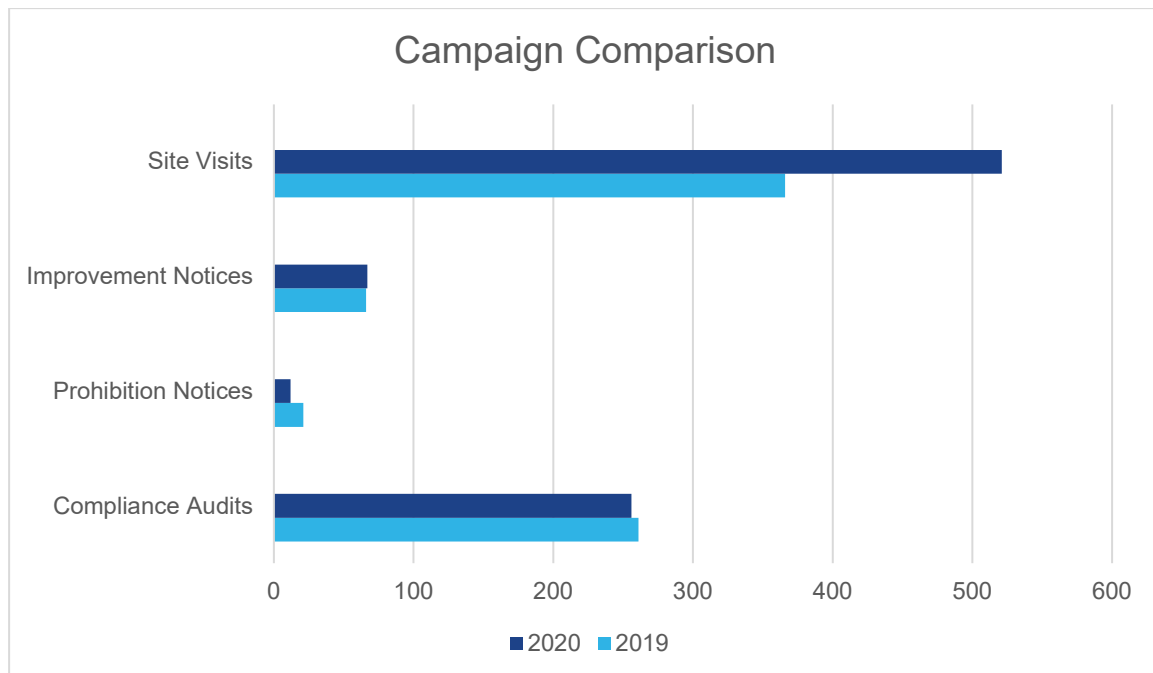
12 statutory notices issued for inspection and maintenance of MEWPs as PCBUs were unable to provide evidence:

- that routine services were performed
- of service / inspection records
- of most recent annual inspections
- that preoperational checks were performed as required by the manufacturer's instructions
- that MEWPs were serviced in accordance to Australian Standard 2550 – 10, namely the three monthly and annual service.

It was identified that MEWP operators signed logbooks as evidence of preoperational checks having been completed, however, in some instances MEWPs were overdue for an inspection or the warning device was not functioning. Accordingly, it was determined that some operators were treating the preoperational checks as a tick and flick exercise.

Whilst improvement notices were the most commonly issued statutory notice, prohibition notices were issued where there was an activity occurring or likely to occur that involved a serious risk to the health or safety of a person.

Figure 5: 2019/2020 Campaign Comparison



Compliance Audits

In 2019 SafeWork SA performed 261 compliance audits. The audits comprised of 234 MEWP audits and 27 system only audits with plant hire suppliers.

In 2020 SafeWork SA performed 256 compliance audits. The plant hire supplier audits consisted of a system audit and audits of MEWPs at the workplace.

Statutory Notices

In 2019, SafeWork SA issued 87 statutory notices in response to non-compliance, including 66 improvement notices and 21 prohibition notices. In 2020, SafeWork SA issued 79 statutory notices in response to non-compliance, including 67 improvement notices and 12 prohibition notices.

The largest areas of non-compliance for both compliance campaigns related to inadequate SWMS, MEWP maintenance, inspections and logbook use, and the provision of information, instruction and training relating to the use of MEWPs. The industry that received the highest number of statutory notices for non-compliance was the construction industry.

The 2020 MEWP campaign identified a:

- 9% decrease in statutory notices issued for SWMS; and
- 33% increase of statutory notices issued for lack of information, training instruction and supervision in the use of an MEWP from the previous 2019 campaign.

Recommendation

It is recommended that SafeWork SA

- continue to provide information and educational material, including the [mobile elevating work platforms guideline](#) to PCBUs.
- communicate the outcome of the campaign to internal and external stakeholders.

Further information

For businesses requiring further information and advice, call SafeWork SA on 1300 365 255 or visit our website. Workplaces can request a visit from our advisory service who can provide practical advice based on your workplace's industry, size, risk, and complexity. Our Advisors can help you understand your work health and safety responsibilities as well as provide practical support to improve your systems, practices, and general approach to safety.