

**ESSENTIAL
STANDARD
no.26**

Working on Roofs

**Safe People
Happy People
Sustainable Business**

KEY REQUIREMENTS

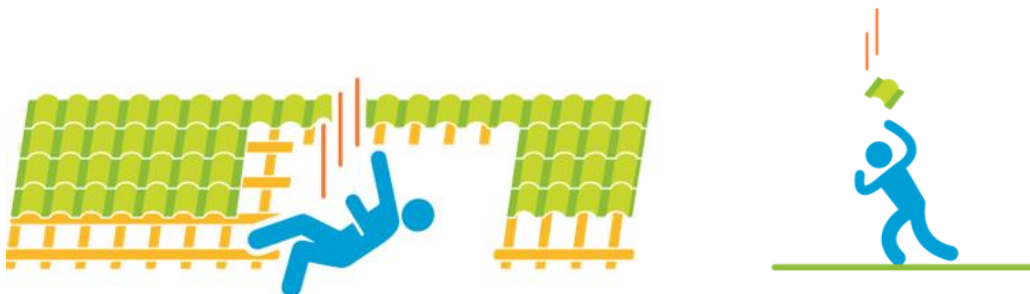
- AVOID Work at Height (WAH) where possible
- PLANNING of activities must be undertaken by competent persons who are familiar with the HIGH-RISK nature of WAH
- PREVENT a fall from occurring if WAH cannot be avoided
- MINIMISE the distance of the fall or its consequence if a fall cannot be prevented
- TRAINING provided to anyone undertaking roof work to ensure they understand the risks and the measures required to control them.
- FRAGILE roof surfaces are to be protected and access to these areas restricted
- EMERGENCY rescue must be considered during the planning stage

1. Introduction

Roof work is a high-risk activity because it involves working at height. Hazards include falling from unprotected roof edges and materials falling onto persons. Working at height is the biggest cause of deaths & life changing serious injuries in any industry with a significant number of incidents arising from a person falling through fragile materials such as skylights.

People who access roofs are not all trained roofers. A person may have to access the roof to undertake essential inspection and maintenance work.

Key factors leading to an incident are not adequately planning the work and not implementing the correct control measure as identified in a risk assessment where simply using barriers as physical protection would be sufficient to prevent a person falling.



2. Planning

If it is not possible to avoid the need to work at height, it is essential to PLAN the work activity.

Planning of the works should consider:

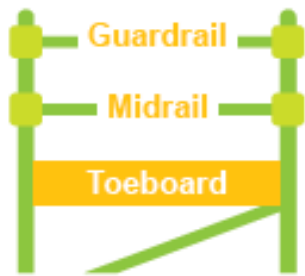
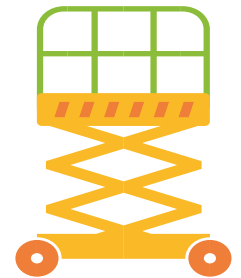
- Identify a safe means of **access** and **egress** to and from the roof
- What existing **physical barriers** are in place or need to be provided to prevent a fall
- How **materials and work equipment** will be brought to and from the roof and how they will be stored
- Any **fragile materials** are clearly identified, and access prevented to these areas
- What **emergency rescue** arrangements are required

3. Undertaking Roof Work

You should consider the following factors when undertaking roof work:

There must be safe access to the roof which can be achieved by using an existing staircase, tower scaffold, independent scaffold, or mobile work platforms.

The use of a ladder may only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that a safer & more suitable means is not justified



Take appropriate precautions to prevent people and materials from falling by using an edge protection system, employing brick guards, and the tethering of frequently used hand tools.

This consists of edge protection that meets the following requirements:

- 950mm to the top of a guardrail.
- An intermediate rail so there is no unprotected gap of more than 470mm.
- A toe board with a minimum height of 150mm to prevent materials from falling.

Identify all the significant hazards & associated risks arising from the work activity. The risk assessment should clearly identify control measures for preventing a fall from height and where the likelihood and severity remain high, consider other measures such as using a safe system of work.

Additionally, the risk assessment should identify the appropriate equipment to be used when accessing the roof and that those undertaking and supervising the works are suitably trained and competent.



Identify any areas covered by fragile materials before work commences.

Ensure that all the necessary precautions have been taken such as restricting access by isolating the area with sturdy guardrails and signage.

The use of personal protective equipment such as harnesses and fall arrest systems seek to only protect the individual and should be considered as the last option in the hierarchy of control.

Where PPE is used, personnel must be trained in its use and for those who are planning and supervising works, a safe system of work must be in place with adequate provision made for emergency rescue.



4. Emergency Rescue

When planning work at height activities, consideration should always be given to how an emergency rescue can be performed and the arrangements should be proportional to the risk arising from the person falling from height.

The requirement for Emergency rescue is particularly important where a person has fallen, and the consequence and distance of the fall is minimised by a fall arrest or net system.

It is essential that anyone who is designated to perform a rescue are trained and competent to do so and that the procedure is communicated to everyone involved in the work at height activity as well as those performing the rescue.



5. Training & Competence

Anybody who plans, sets a person to work undertakes work at height and supervises work must be suitably trained and competent.

The training should include information such as the hazards that could be encountered, recognising fragile surfaces, collective measures of protection, personal protection, emergency rescue considerations and what suitable control measures should be considered to prevent a fall from occurring.

