

26
October
2022

WSH ALERT

SERIOUS ACCIDENT/ INCIDENT

Worker injured after falling from a roof

A worker was working on the roof of a private home and had moved towards the roof edge to take a photo of the work location. As he was moving backwards in a squatting position, he slipped on the wet floor, leaned backwards, and ended up placing his hand on the corrugated roof sheet for support. The roof sheet, however, gave way and he fell 2.67m to the ground.

The worker suffered spinal injuries and was hospitalised. He has since recovered.

The injured worker did not use travel restraints.



Overview of accident scene.

Recommendations

Working on roofs is a high-risk activity. Falls from roofs can result in serious and even fatal injuries. Recent fatal workplace accidents involving work on roofs occurred on [24 May](#) and [19 May](#) 2022. To prevent similar accidents, consider the following measures:

- **Roof hazard assessment:** Before starting work, identify if hazards exist (e.g. open sides, roof openings, fragile surfaces). Confirm with your client or the building occupier the location(s) of fragile surfaces on the roof. Start work on roofs only after risk controls are in place.
- **Worker training:** Deploy only workers who have successfully completed the Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) Perform Work at Height course to work on roofs. Additionally, workers assigned for asbestos removal work must have completed the WSQ Remove Asbestos From Workplace course.
- **Safer work method:** If fragile surfaces are present, explore safer methods of work like working from under (e.g. using a tower scaffold) or above (e.g. using a mobile elevated work platform) the fragile surface so that there is no need to go onto the roof.
- **Safe roof access:** If permanent staircase access to the roof is not available, plan and provide a safe means for roof access and egress (e.g. setting up a scaffold stair tower).
- **Fall Prevention Plan (FPP):** If work on the roof next to an open side or fragile surface cannot be avoided, develop and implement a site-specific FPP for the roof work. For example, a travel restraint system with a secure anchor point may be used to prevent workers from coming too close to the open side or fragile surface.
- **Mark fragile surfaces; communicate to all:** Mark and barricade (where possible) all fragile surfaces to alert and prevent any persons from falling through. Display warning signs at entry points to all work areas containing fragile surfaces. Install additional warning signs at the specific location(s) where fragile surfaces are found. Instruct workers never to step directly on or come into contact with fragile surfaces.
- **Safe condition for roof work:** If the rooftop is wet, consider rescheduling the work to a later time when the roof is dry to avoid slipping hazards. Equip roof workers with anti-slip safety footwear.

For more information, refer to WSH Council's [Code of Practice for Working Safely at Heights](#), [WSH Guidelines for Working Safely on Roofs](#), and [WSH Guidelines on Management and Removal of Asbestos](#).

* Please note that the recommendations provided here are not exhaustive and they are meant to enhance workplace safety and health so that a recurrence may be prevented. The information and recommendations provided are not to be construed as implying liability on any party nor should it be taken to encapsulate all the responsibilities and obligations under the law.

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