

SAFETY MEMO

May 30th, 2022 – Site visit on the roof



Did you know?

Introduction

People such as engineers, architects, operators, contractors, inspectors, and other employees need access to the facility roof for many reasons including equipment installation, inspections, maintenance, testing, servicing, and repair. Roof access is not an everyday part of someone's job, so it's often easier to ignore the safety hazards that exist. However, the rooftop is the most common area where employees are potentially exposed to a fall hazard. Building owners, employers, facility managers, and contractors are each responsible for safety considerations, to provide a safe rooftop access system, rooftop protection, fall protection, and safety equipment.

If you perform any type of work on rooftop, you need to follow the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations for your province or territory and wear proper PPE / PFAS (Personal Fall Arrest System). If you access a roof for a site visit, you still need to ensure to stay safe when climb up and down a ladder, walk on the roof and implement precautions needed to control the risk.

The most common rooftop hazards are fall hazards, (off the roof and through unguarded sky lights) electricity (power lines and hidden electricity hazards), hazardous substances (exposure to asbestos, paint fumes, exhaust harmful chemicals, hazardous materials that vent or collect on the roof surface, etc.), and extreme temperatures (heat/cold).⁴

Prevention Measures

- Avoid accessing the roof during high winds, snow, storms, rain, or other adverse weather conditions.
- Assess the area for potential ice, frost, or wetness
- Only individuals with appropriate training should climb steeply pitched roofs
- Wear head protection such as a hard hat or bump cap to protect against potential head injuries
- Climbing a fixed ladder greater than 20 feet, fall protection must be provided such as: Cage⁷ or ladder safety system⁸
- Make sure the ladder is stable before you climb it. Maintain three-points of contact when ascending or descending the ladder. Move slowly and be careful transitioning to and from the top of a roof ladder.
- The open roof hatch is a safety hazard. Watch out it and stay away during your walk on the roof. Be aware and limit to approach any roof holes or openings, skylights, fragile surfaces.

- Watch out for structural issues, avoid areas that appear darker than the rest of the roof or are dipping or sagging. These clues could indicate water damage on the roof that has created weak/soft spots
- Never walk backwards on a roof
- If you move from one level to another level on the rooftop (uneven surfaces), use roofstep or handrail/guardrail.
- It is important to always be aware of where the roof edge is. Never approach more than 2 meters (6.5 ft) to an unprotected roof edge or platform. For safety, maintain 4.5 meters (15 ft) distance from the edge of an unprotected roof.
- Don't access the roof alone; always have a buddy with you in the case of a slip or fall, or if an emergency occurs.



References

- ¹ Fall Protection - Legislation
https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/fall%20protection_legislation.html
 - ² Ladders – Health and Safety Fact Sheets:
<https://www.ccohs.ca/topics/hazards/safety/ladders/>
 - ³ Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, in BC:
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation>
 - ⁴ Roof Safety
<https://safetyculture.com/topics/roof-safety/>
 - ⁵ Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations:
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-86-304/index.html>
 - ⁶ Stairways and Ladders:
<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.1053>
 - ⁷ PIP Standard STF 0550
 - ⁸ ANSI 14.3-2018 Ladders- Fixed Safety Requirements
- [†] European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, Factsheet 49 – Safe roofwork <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/factsheet-49-safe-roofwork>