

**ESSENTIAL  
STANDARD  
no.2**

# Working on Roofs



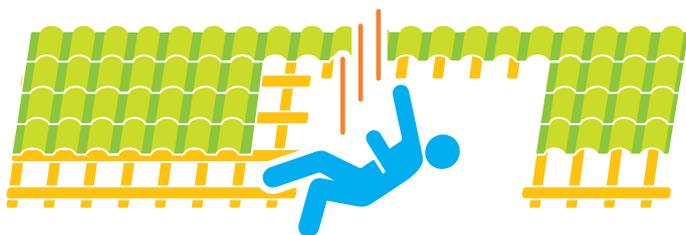
## KEY MESSAGES

- Always plan to avoid work at height if possible. If it is unavoidable, try to ensure that physical protection is provided.
- Ensure that anyone undertaking roof work is trained in the risks and the measures required to control them.
- Ensure that equipment required to carry out the work safely is in place.
- Always ensure that fragile roof materials are protected.

### 1. Introduction

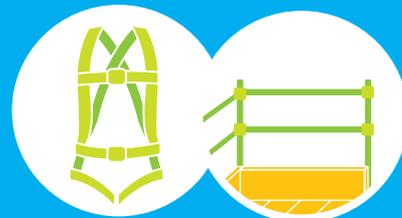
Roof work is a high risk because it involves working at height. Hazards include falling from unprotected roof edges and **falling through fragile roofs**. Working at height is the biggest cause of deaths in any industry and most of these incidents are from falls through fragile materials. There are also many serious injuries from roof work and these are often permanent disabilities.

People who access roofs are not all trained roofers. Sometimes they must go on the roof for maintenance or surveying. A lack of thought and poor management control often lead to incidents. In most cases, you can use basic physical protection such as barriers to prevent incidents.



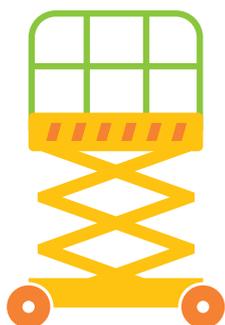
### 2. Planning

The best plan to avoid incidents with roof work is to eliminate or reduce the need to work at height. If you must do work at height you should plan a **safe place of work with collective protection**.

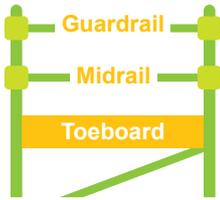


### 3. Undertaking Roof Work

You should consider the following factors when undertaking roof work:



- There must be safe access to the roof. This can include tower scaffolds, independent scaffolds or mobile work platforms. Only use a ladder if more suitable means is not justified.



- Take appropriate precautions to prevent people and materials from falling. This consists of edge protection that meets the following requirements:
  - 950mm to the top of a guardrail.
  - An intermediate or other rigid barrier so there is no unprotected gap of more than 470mm.
  - A toe board with a minimum height of 150mm to prevent materials from falling.
  - For further information please refer to *Essential Standard 17 Scaffolding*



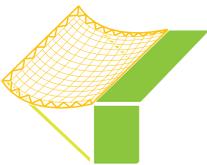
- Assess all work before it starts, even short duration work and use appropriate safeguards. Manage the risk of falling during short duration work by ensuring that only the correct equipment is used, people are properly trained and there is supervision.



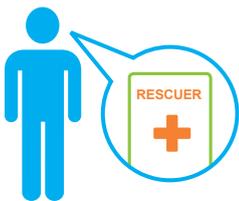
- Identify any areas covered by fragile materials before work starts and take the necessary precautions. For example, use guardrails and covers to isolate the fragile areas.



- Carefully assess whether to use harnesses. If you do, there must be a full safe system of work with trained personnel and supervision. Any roof work where safety harnesses are used must also include a plan for rescue.



- Only use safety nets where physical fall prevention is not possible. Nets must be fitted close to the underside of the working platform and the maximum sag must be less than 2m.



- If you use safety nets and harnesses, there must be a plan for fall recovery. Rescuers must be trained in the procedure and equipment readily available.

## 4. Training and Competence

All those carrying out the following must be trained:

- Planning of work at height.
- Installing or erecting work equipment for working at height.
- Using a harness and safety nets.



Training should include information on the hazards you may encounter, such as recognising fragile materials and the control measure needed to manage them.

Before anyone accesses a roof, you must ensure that they have been trained in doing their job at height. For example, surveyors, engineers and quantity surveyors need training in their work at height.