Flat Roofing Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Single-unit (monolithic) roofing applied to flat roofs may seem "safer" to some roof workers, but the work is still at height and subject to many similar hazards and safety requirements as sloped roof work.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

GENERAL HAZARDS/DANGERS OF ROOF WORK

- Moisture – rain, snow, or frost may cause slippery conditions on the roof.
- Dirt or sawdust – may cause slippery conditions on the roof.
- Footwear – the traction of shoes/boots varies, always wear good traction shoes/boots.
- Tripping hazards – tools, electric cords, etc. can create a tripping hazard.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

FLAT ROOF SAFETY – THE PARTICULARS

Roof workers installing, maintaining, or repairing flat roofs with a height more than 20 feet or using backward-pulling machinery, such as felt-layers need protection from falls. Fall protection measures can include one or a combination of the following:

- Personal fall protection.
- Standard railings and toe boards.
- Catch platforms.
- Eave barriers.
- Scaffold platforms.
- Parapets (24-inches high).

When the fall protection measures listed above are not used, mark the edges of the flat roof with headers and warning lines to notify workers of potential fall hazard areas using the following guidelines:

- Lay headers (sheets of roofing or other materials) no closer than five feet inside the edges of the roof and parallel to the roofline.
- Install warning lines no closer than five feet inside the roof edges and at a height of 34-to-45 inches.
- Place warning lines and headers around the entire roof perimeter.

- If warning lines and headers are used only in the work area, move them as the work progresses around the roof to provide a continuous warning to workers.
- Connect material handling areas, storage areas, and access paths on the rooftop with a clear access pathway formed by two warning lines
- When a pathway is not in use, fasten a rope, wire, or chain equal in strength to the warning line across the pathway entrance from the work area.

Warning lines have specification requirements that include:

- Warning lines can consist of rope, wire, or similar material with a tensile strength of at least 500 pounds.
- Flag warning lines with a highly visible material at six-foot intervals.
- Use sturdy fixed or portable stanchions that are designed to minimize tip over or displacement to support the warning lines.
- Attach the warning lines to each stanchion so they don’t slide and create slack between stanchions when you pull on them.

KEY ROOF SAFETY GUIDELINES

- **Perform a risk assessment** – identify the risks that will be encountered before performing the specific tasks required for the job.
- **Getting on and off the roof** – A secure way to enter and exit the roof is essential.
- **Fall arrest system** – a fall arrest system is required if a worker may fall from an elevated position. As a general rule, the fall arrest system should be used if the working height is greater than six feet.
- **Falling Material** – maintain good housekeeping on the roof to stop material that could fall.
- **Training** – roof workers need the knowledge, skills, and experience to work safely.
- **Weather conditions** – work should not occur during icy, rainy, or windy conditions.
- **Ladders and scaffolding** – make sure they are structurally sound and installed properly.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Anyone working on a roof shall be given training by a competent person on how to work safely at height.

A competent person shall have the relevant skills, knowledge, and experience to undertake a brittle roof assessment.

Anyone using a harness system, (for example, total restraint system, work positioning system or fall arrest system) should be closely supervised by a competent person or be a competent person themselves.

At least two workers should be present when using fall arrest systems and they should be trained in the safe use of the equipment. A rescue plan should always be in place and workers trained in the rescue procedures identified in the plan.

FINAL WORD

The hazards, dangers or risks of working at heights on roofing projects are the same whether it is on flat roofs, or, any degree or kind of slope.