

Safeguard

Construction and Demolition Fragile roofing



Government
of South Australia
SafeWork SA

Objective

To provide guidance on safety measures that must be in place when working on fragile roofing.

Background

Fragile roofing materials include corroded corrugated steel cladding, structurally unsound roof members, plastic sheeting, wired glass and corrugated asbestos-cement roof sheeting.

Fragile roofing materials may fracture without warning. Fractures can occur so rapidly that a worker could easily fall through the roof, suffering serious or even fatal injuries.

Risk control measures

Before working on any roof area or using the roof as a means of access (e.g. for construction, repair, maintenance, demolition or inspection), it is essential to identify all potential hazards and conduct a risk assessment.

This risk assessment should include:

- inspection of the perimeter walls for warning notices
- visual inspection of the roof to determine the presence, condition and extent of fragile materials
- review of any asbestos register (where applicable)
- existence and condition of safety mesh
- means of access and egress
- any other factors that may affect the health and safety of workers.

A plan to safely carry out the work should then be developed (e.g. safe work method statements could be used).

The risk assessment may identify the need to use a safety harness and fall arrest equipment such as static lines, running lines or inertia reels. Fall arrest equipment needs to be installed by a licensed scaffolder or rigger.

It is also vital to consider:

- accessibility of access and egress points
- structural integrity of the roof, including the cladding and supports
- distribution of the load on the roof.

When working on fragile roofing materials, appropriate access equipment such as crawl boards, roof ladders, walkways and planks should be used.

Suitable footwear that controls the risk of slipping and other site hazards must be worn when working on or near fragile roofs.

Fragile roof signage must be fixed to the walls of buildings where access can be made to fragile roofs. Signs should be made from sheet metal or other approved material that is at least 600mm by 450mm in size with wording and layout similar to that shown below.

Refer to Australian Standard *AS 1318: Use of colour for the marking of physical hazards and the identification of certain equipment in industry*.



Fragile skylights within buildings or structures must be:

- secured with safety wire mesh immediately above or below the skylight
- regularly maintained.

If you are unsure about whether safety mesh is fitted, consider the roof as unmeshed and dangerous.

Further information

Code of Practice – Managing the Risk of Falls at Workplaces

Code of Practice – Demolition Work

National Construction Code

AS 1562.3: Design and installation of sheet roof and wall cladding – Plastic

AS 1318: Use of colour for the marking of physical hazards and the identification of certain equipment in industry

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