



Safe Working on Brittle Roofs



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INTRODUCTION

This manual provides guidelines for working safely on fragile or brittle roofs. Brittle roofs include:

- asbestos sheet,
- fibrolite sheet,
- metal roofs where the condition is unsound or suspect.

WARNING

PERSONS SHALL NOT WALK DIRECTLY ON FRAGILE OR BRITTLE ROOFS.

1. GENERAL

The following general rules shall apply when work is being done on fragile or brittle roofs:

- All roof access doors where fragile material forms the whole or any part of the roof shall be locked at all times and shall have warning signs, stating for example "DANGER FRAGILE ROOFING - USE WORKING PLATFORM", placed.
- Potential access points to a roof with fragile material shall have warning signs bearing the words "NO ACCESS" placed at each potential access point that is not to be used for access.
- Only authorised persons are permitted to work on asbestos, ampelite and other fragile material roofs. Authorised persons are defined as having successfully completed a training course in safe working at heights.
- Fall protection equipment shall comply with the CSBP procedure *Fall Protection Equipment (GM-11-031-10)*.
- Repairs, removal or disposal of asbestos sheeting shall comply with the CSBP procedure *Asbestos Cement Building Products Removal (GM-11-031-20)*.
- This guide shall be used in conjunction with:
 - CSBP procedure *Safe working at Heights (GM-11-031-02)*.
 - Worksafe WA Code of Practice - The Prevention of Falls at Workplaces.



- Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 - Division 5 Prevention of Falls at the Workplace.
- Australian Standards AS1639. The design and installation of corrugated fibre-reinforced cement roofing and wall cladding.

2. PREPARATION

Before work starts, all personnel shall report to the Field Project Coordinator or designated Field Supervisor who ensures that the personnel have:

- completed a training course in safe working at heights,
- identified the hazards involved in each particular job, for example, existence or condition of safety mesh and structural soundness of the roof.
- completed a Job Safety Analysis Work sheet Form SF0426 (see *Conducting Task Analysis and Developing Operating Instructions DP-11-031-23*) for the work,
- obtained an Asbestos/Fibro Cement Sheeting Certificate (PF2492) to carry out the work,
- obtained a Work Clearance Certificate Form PF2462 (see *Work Permit System GM-11-031-51*) from the appropriate area.

3. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

The following safety precautions shall be observed when work is being done on fragile or brittle roofs:

- While working or gaining access to the work area on a roof, each person shall wear, at all times, approved fall protection equipment attached to a fixed static line or secure anchorage point.
- Full body harnesses of the parachute type shall be worn attached at the top dorsal position to the lanyard, inertia reel or lifeline.
- Personnel required to work on roofs shall not walk directly on sheeting. Where there is a risk that a person might fall through the roof, non-corrosive safety mesh that is capable of preventing a person falling through the roof is securely fixed directly over the top of, or underneath of the brittle or fragile areas. Where permanent walkways are not provided, temporary walkways such as planks, arc mesh or chain-mesh shall be used as a means of access and egress to and around the work area.
- Temporary roof ladders shall be used at the work area.
- Except in cases of extreme emergency, no work shall be done in wet or windy weather conditions, where there is any danger of sheets being blown away, or where a slippery condition may cause a worker to lose his/her balance.



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- Where fall arrest equipment is used, namely inertia reels, consideration shall be given to the “pendulum effect”. In cases where this effect is likely, perimeter guardrails shall be fitted.
- No loose materials shall be left on the roof. Loose materials shall be lowered to the ground, not dropped or thrown.
- Rubber soled footwear shall be worn and particular care shall be taken when the roof is wet with frost, dew or rain.
- Electrical installations directly under the roof area being worked on shall be isolated where practical.
- The ground below the work area shall be roped off or guarded if there is any danger of objects falling.
- Hoisting of sheets must be carried out in an approved and safe manner. Where the building eave height exceeds 6 metres, a materials hoist or crane shall be provided.
- Spare sheets on the roof space shall be secured or tied with terylene rope to prevent dislodgement.
- For new roof installation, or where extensive repair or replacement of existing roof is planned, access to the roof shall be in accordance with the WA Code of Practice – The Prevention of Falls at Workplaces and where appropriate AS1639.

4. TRAINING

The CSBP responsible Officer shall ensure persons are trained and competent to carry out work on brittle roofs.

Training shall be carried out annually and evidence of successful completion is required.

5. NON-COMPLIANCE

Personnel who do not conform to this instruction shall be requested to discontinue working until prepared to comply. Repeated failures to comply will lead to removal from the register of approved persons.