

**Annex E to Method Statement 3
Work on Flat Roofs: Protection Against Falls**

Introduction:

This Safe Working Procedure outlines the precautions necessary to prevent falls when working at heights exceeding 2 metres on flat roofs.

Almost one in five deaths in construction occur in roof-work, mainly from falls. However most of those killed were specialist roof-workers, and a significant proportion were people who were simply involved in maintaining and cleaning roofs.

NEARLY ALL ROOF-WORK DEATHS COULD BE PREVENTED BY THE PROVISION AND PROPER USE OF READILY AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT!

Precautions:

Before deciding what precautions are required for work on flat roofs, the first consideration must be of the possible hazards that may be encountered when carrying out the work. These include:

WILL THE WORK INVOLVE ANYONE APPROACHING WITHIN 2 METRES OF AN OPEN EDGE?

ARE THERE ANY UN-FENCED OPENINGS ON THE ROOF?

If the **ASSESSMENT** indicates that none of these factors are involved and the **RISK** of falling through the roof does not exist it may still be useful to indicate the designated work area by the use of **WARNING TAPE OR BARRIERS** so that people are not tempted to approach any **OPEN EDGES!**

IF THE WARNING TAPE IS USED IT SHOULD NEVER BE ERECTED CLOSER THAN 2 METRES FROM AN UNPROTECTED EDGE. IN ADDITION THE WORK SHOULD BE CLOSELY SUPERVISED TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE DO NOT GO OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED AREA!

Open Edges:

In situations where people have to approach the roof edge;

GUARD RAILS (STRONG ENOUGH TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SOMEONE FALLING) AND TOE-BOARDS WILL BE REQUIRED!

HAZARD WARNING TAPE WILL NOT ACT AS A BARRIER TO PREVENT PEOPLE FALLING OVER THE EDGE AND SHOULD NEVER BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE!

Unfenced Openings:

Openings in the work areas liable to be approached should either be protected by guard rails and toe-boards or by **SUBSTANTIAL COVERS** which **MUST BE FIXED IN POSITION AND SUITABLY MARKED** eg; **HOLE BELOW!**

Protection of Others:

While protection of operatives is important;

IT IS EQUALLY ESSENTIAL THAT SUITABLE PRECAUTIONS ARE TAKEN TO PROTECT OTHERS, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, WHO MAY BE CLOSE TO THE WORK SITE!

TOE-BOARDS OR OTHER SUBSTANTIAL MEANS MUST BE PROVIDED AT THE EDGES TO PHYSICALLY PREVENT MATERIALS AND TOOLS FROM FALLING!

LOOSE MATERIALS AND TOOLS MUST BE STORED AWAY FROM ROOF EDGES!

NEVER THROW MATERIALS FROM A ROOF; THEY SHOULD BE LOWERED TO THE GROUND OR DISPOSED OF USING ENCLOSED RUBBISH CHUTES!