

SAFE SYSTEM OF WORKING ON STATION ROOFS

GUIDANCE FOR WORKING ON STATION ROOFS

1 INTRODUCTION

High safety standards are essential however long or short term the work is. The nature of the precautions needed may vary from one job to another, but not providing any safeguards is simply unacceptable.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE INDG 284).

1.1 The main principles that should be applied to establishing safe systems of work on roofs are:

- robust management planning and supervision;
- prioritised physical control measures (**e.g. fall prevention before fall arrest**);
- physical controls in order of consideration should be:
 - o fixed Guardrail;
 - o nets;
 - o personal Fall Restraint Equipment;
 - o personal Fall Arrest Equipment.

In reality a combination of these supervisory and physical control measures may be used, but physical controls must be considered in the above order when carrying out a risk assessment. However, robust management and supervision of work at height is **not** an option.

1.2 The General Management of Risk for Work at Height

Questions to be considered when planning work on station roof should include but not be limited to:

- Is the work itself even necessary?
- Is work at height absolutely necessary?
- Can the work be carried out a less hazardous way?
- A risk assessment should be carried out for **all** work at height.
- Any method statement for roof work must be formally accepted by a Network Rail representative (normally the Contract Administrator / Manager) – or a person with designated authority. The Contract Administrator / Manager may consult with an appropriate safety and technical manager.
- A task-specific Permit to Work for 'High Level' work will be required for **all** work on station roofs. This application must be obtained locally from the station concerned before work commences.

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Broadly, a risk assessment should, as a minimum, cover the following areas of activity:

- **Access** – including transport of any equipment and materials to the work-site / significant hazards that may be encountered by employees on the way to the work-site.
- **Work-site set-up** – including hazards to employees and third parties, including the availability of suitable guard-rails / platforms.
- **Weather** – additional hazards created by inclement weather conditions such as high winds, hail and sub-zero temperatures.
- **The task** – hazards encountered during the work and engendered by the work (affecting employees and third parties). e.g. Protection of others who may be hit by falling objects. Risk monitoring during tasks.
- **Emergency arrangements** – this includes planning for emergencies and how to deal with any incidents or accidents (rescue scenarios).
- **Finishing work and clearing the work-site** – e.g. if the work is suspended, is the site going to be hazardous to others?
- **Egress** – hazards during the return of people, equipment and materials from the roof back to a place of safety.

Everyone involved in the work needs to be familiar with the safe method of work and understand their responsibilities. This would normally involve tool box talks carried out by the site supervisor. In other words, all work at height should be **planned**.

Method statements should be task and site specific, they should describe systematically and clearly the precautions and systems of work identified during risk assessment. See this document and **Form FS-38D**.

The method statement should also describe the arrangements for terminating the work and leaving the work-site in the event of an emergency. See **Form FS-38D** for suggested contents of a method statement.

2

THE GENERAL SUPERVISION OF WORK AT HEIGHT

- A Competent Person e.g. senior member of contractor group or as detailed in the method of work should directly supervise the work. That is a person with the knowledge, skills, and experience to recognise risks arising from the work and the measures required to adequately control those risks. **Lone workers must not carry out physical work at height.**
- A 'Competent Person' should be someone who has been briefed or inducted on specific hazards of working at height at a particular location (including access and egress hazards) and has already gained adequate knowledge of the specific environment (general layout / safe walking routes / hazards / emergency-evacuation procedures, etc).
- Access and egress hazards (often via the like of plant rooms, voids and access windows) should be clearly understood by the work-team. Trip hazards (cables, service ducting, etc) and low-level hazards (structural beams / roof joists etc) are common on roof access routes.



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- A briefing should be given by the senior member (or 'Competent Person') in the work-team before attempting to access the roof and on reaching the work location e.g. Exact location of work / Nature of work / Roles and Responsibilities / Means of access / Route to work-site / Hazards on route to work-site / Basic Permit to Work details / Limits of work-site / Emergency-Evacuation arrangements.
- The work team should understand the risks and controls required when working on or between sloping or pitched roofs (which may be fragile). The risks applicable to working in a valley between two pitched roofs will be different to actual work on a pitched roof. See: **Working on Roofs – HSE Guidance Note INDG 284** and **Safety in Roof Work – HSE Guidance HSG 33** for further (and specific) guidance.

2.1

Edge Protection

- Consideration should be given to defining and demarcating a safe area beyond which persons, material and equipment must not go (see above). Control measures identified under this survey must be implemented prior to the commencement of work. This should be briefed to the team by the Competent Person and clearly understood by all the work-team. Consideration should be given to the provision of a 'site warden' (someone appointed to keep watch over the team) in such circumstances and / or physical barriers to prevent access to unsafe areas.
- The integrity of existing physical edge protection (e.g. a handrail) should not be relied upon to protect against falls until a competent person has checked it.
- Where physical edge protection needs to be installed (where an already existing parapet of adequate dimensions doesn't exist) – this should meet minimum legal standards:
 - o A main guard rail at least 910mm above the edge.

Note: This is to be raised to 950mm under 'The Temporary Work at Height Regulations 2003'.

- o A toe board at least 150mm high.
- o An intermediate guard rail or other barrier so that there is no gap more than 470mm.

2.2

Safety Nets

If guard rails are not practicable, safety nets should be considered as part of the hazard identification and risk assessment process. Nets must be installed by contractors who are competent – normally those who hold FASET (Fall Arrest Safety Equipment Training) cards.



This is a scheme supported by the **CITB (Construction Industry Training Board)**. Safety nets should be manufactured to current European and British standards (**EN1263 part 1**), and installed in compliance with (**EN1263 part 2**).

EXAMPLE

When planning work where a safety net provides the main means of safety arrest, the planning must include the means by which a person who falls into the net will be rescued within a reasonable timescale.