THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STANDARDS

MASSsafetyWorks!
Workplace Safety is No Accident

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Removing Snow from Rooftops on Municipal and State Property

After excessive snowfall, concerns arise about the weight of snow and the structural integrity of the roof. Workers assigned to remove snow from rooftops are at high risk of injury from falling off the roof edge or falling through skylights.

Employers must plan ahead to protect all workers from falling off the roof.

Prevent Worker Injury When Removing Snow from Roofs

- Use snow removal methods that do not involve workers going onto roofs, when possible.
- Provide Fall Protection equipment to workers who go onto roofs such as full body harnesses, shock-absorbing lanyards, lifelines, and engineered anchor points.
- Guard skylights, so workers do not fall through.
- Mark skylights, roof drains, and vents that could trip workers.
- Avoid contact with electrical power lines. Keep ladders, aerial lifts and workers at least 10 feet away from power lines.
- Evaluate weight load exerted on roof to ensure the roof can support the workers and equipment.
- Train workers to use Fall Protection harness, lifelines and anchor points correctly.

For more detailed information to prevent injury, refer to OSHA Publication 3513 “Hazard Alert: Falls and Other Hazards to Workers Removing Snow from Rooftops and Other Elevated Surfaces” available at: www.osha.gov



A method to protect workers from falling is required. One example of Fall Protection is a full-body harness with a shock-absorbing lanyard attached to a rope grab and vertical lifeline that is attached to a separate 5000-pound anchor point per worker.

Frequently Asked Questions

The roof is flat. Is Fall Protection still required?

Answer: YES. There is no exemption unless there is a railing protecting the entire perimeter.

I won’t go closer than 6 feet to the edge. Is Fall Protection still required?

Answer: YES. The 6 foot rule for construction does not apply to roof maintenance.

Do I still need fall protection if I mark the skylights with spray paint?

Answer: YES. The skylight is still considered a fall hazard.

Does the Fall Protection requirement apply to public sector workers?

Answer: YES. M.G.L. chapter 149, §6 requires public sector employers to prevent workers from work-related injury such as falling off a roof. The OSHA Fall Protection requirements outline the minimum methods to keep employees safe.