Roofing Safety (Multiple-Unit Roof Coverings) Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

There are many key factors that are associated with roofing, which may impact the lives of roofers who often face major risks at work. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), roofing is one of the leading causes of falling deaths among construction workers. The Bureau of labor statistics has reported that roofers are highly exposed to nonfatal injuries.

WHAT´S THE DANGER

ROOFING WORK HAZARDS – GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH POTENTIAL HAZARDS

1. **Inappropriate Use of Safety Gear and Equipment.** The benefit of safety gear is only achieved when the equipment is used appropriately.
2. **Be Mindful of the Edge of the Roof.** Even experienced roofers lose track of their position on the roof.
3. **Lack of Proper Training.** Workers who are not properly trained are rooftop safety hazards.
4. **Roof Instability and Holes in the Roof.** It is important to check its stability before climbing up.
5. **Weather Conditions.** Roof shingles get slippery when it is raining, snowing, or windy, making falls pretty easy.
6. **Ladder Safety.** Most roof accidents occur because the ladder is placed incorrectly.
7. **Access to Rooftop Equipment.** The equipment required for the roof project should be accessible with non-slip walkway and safety guardrails.
8. **Fall Heights and Split-Level Roofs.** Split level roofing creates more rooftop hazards being the highest point of the roof that is far off the ground.

9. **The Roof Pitch.** It is another rooftop area that poses a safety hazard. Houses with steeper pitches are more likely to cause falls than those with flat roofs.
10. **Poor Line of Sight.** Maintaining a clear line of sight is imperative so that you will know your location in relation to the edge of the roof and can avoid potential hazards.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

GUIDELINES TO KEEP WORKERS SAFE IN ROOFING OPERATIONS

1. PARTICIPATE IN SAFETY TRAINING. For employees it's crucial to receive adequate safety training before setting foot on a roof.

2. IDENTIFY AND ASSESS THE HAZARDS. Workers should evaluate the site to find any potential hazards before the work begins. The assessment should encompass factors like the height of the structure, the roof's pitch and angle, the presence of skylights, and the material type. Once hazards are identified, you can develop a plan to control or eliminate them.

3. PAY ATTENTION TO WEATHER CONDITIONS. Like any occupation that involves working outdoors, roofing can be adversely affected by the weather. Any form of precipitation can make footing on rooftops precarious and increase the risk of slipping and falling. Heavy winds can also pose a hazard, especially when sudden gusts catch workers off guard.

4. WORK WITH A PARTNER. A simple repair job could lead to a situation that might result in an injury. Always have at least two people to a job or take someone with you if you're handling the project yourself. One person can "spot" the other, a proactive step that can prevent accidents.

5. EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN USING LADDERS WITH SAFE PRACTICES

- Set up the ladder on a flat, solid surface and secure it at the top and bottom.
- Position it to create a slope with a 4:1 ratio of 1 foot back for every 4 feet up.

- Check the ladder for any defects – loose or broken rungs, unsecured nuts, bolts, or screws, or warping or rotting – before each use.
- Place ladders at least 10 feet away from electrical power lines.
- Always face the ladder when boarding and maintain three contact points – two feet and one hand or one foot and two hands – while climbing.
- Ensure the ladder's rungs have no oil, moisture, or other slippery materials on them.
- Avoid carrying awkward or heavy loads when ascending or descending.
- Never attempt to reposition a person or materials while they're on the ladder.
- If you're using an extension ladder, make sure to engage the locks.
- Check the ladder's maximum load rating and stay within it.

Anyone performing roofing trade work should have either 100% tie-off protection, meaning they're tethered to the roof, or install warning lines 6 feet from the roof's edge and include fall protection extending past this boundary. You should also wear a safety harness and attach it to a permanent anchor on the roof's edge. Consider installing netting or guardrails to provide additional safety.

6. DRESS APPROPRIATELY. Choose closed-toed shoes or soft-soled work boots with sufficient tread to prevent slipping. Wear outer clothing that keeps you comfortable based on the temperature but doesn't restrict movement. A hard hat and goggles will provide essential protection for your head and eyes when working with or around roofing materials. Always wear gloves when using tools or handling materials.

7. KEEP WORK AREAS NEAT AND CLEAN. A roof undergoing construction or repairs can quickly become littered with tools, equipment, and discarded materials. Any of these objects can create a tripping hazard.

8. ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS. Roofers who are distracted could easily

trip over an object or slip off the roof. Prohibit smartphone use on the job site unless using it for work-related purposes.

9. AVOID WORKING WHILE IMPAIRED. Roofing contractors should have a strict policy prohibiting alcohol or recreational drugs on the job. Many prescription medications can also cause dizziness, light-headedness.

10. USE NAIL GUNS SAFELY.

11. WORKING WITH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. Some roofing jobs could expose workers to hazardous substances, including asbestos, lead, or silica. These materials and several others can cause significant health issues. Workers need to be aware of the possible presence of these substances, especially when working with older roofs constructed before the awareness of how dangerous these materials can be. Ensure the proper procedures to keep workers safe are implemented.

FINAL WORD

The amount of roofing contractors dying as a result of workplace injuries has modestly decreased but it is now one of the top three fatal occupations in the U.S.