

## Safety Tips - Removing Snow from Rooftops

Every year, workers are killed or seriously injured while performing snow or ice removal from rooftops and other building structures, such as decks.

Often workers climb directly onto the roofs or structures and use equipment such as shovels, snow rakes, snow blowers and ladders to access roofs and apply de-icing materials. Workers who perform these activities may have little experience or training on the hazards of such operations or work.

### 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.
- Guard skylights so workers do not fall through.
- Mark skylights, roof drains, vents that might be hidden by the snow.
- 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 that the roof can hold the snow plus workers and equipment. Do not pile snow on roof.
- Train workers to use fall protection harness and anchor points correctly, use aerial lifts safely, use ladders safely, and avoid electrical power lines.
- Protect people on the ground from snow and ice falling off the roof during removal operations.



Employers must plan ahead to protect workers conducting snow removal from roofs. Prevent workers from falling off the roof, and prevent workers from falling through skylights.

Based on findings of worksite investigations, falls cause the most worker fatalities and injuries during rooftop snow removal. Workers may fall off roof edges, through skylights, and from ladders and aerial lifts. Workers may also be injured or killed by a roof collapse.

Workers removing snow face other significant hazards in addition to falls from roofs, including:

- Amputations, eye injuries, and other injuries associated with the use of snowblowers and other mechanized equipment.
- Collapses or tip-overs when using aerial lifts.
- Entrapment and suffocation under falling snow drifts or snow piles.
- Shock/electrocution hazards from contacting power lines or damaged extension cords.
- Frostbite or hypothermia from cold and windy conditions.
- Musculoskeletal injuries from overexertion.

For more detailed information, refer to OSHA Publication 3515, "Hazard Alert: Falls and Other Hazards to Workers Removing Snow from Rooftops and Other Elevated Surfaces" available at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)