

Roof Edges, Warning Lines, and Holes

COMPANY

PROJECT

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Roofing puts us near open edges, skylights, and access holes while we move tools and materials. The right protection depends on the slope of the roof and the task. Before going up, know which protection applies to your task.

Match the protection to the roof

- For roofing on low-slope roofs with unprotected edges 6 feet or more above a lower level, OSHA requires fall protection. Confirm the planned system before starting.
- Options include guardrails, safety nets, or a personal fall arrest system: a harness and connecting equipment that stops a fall. Do not assume a warning line alone is enough.
- On steep roofs at that height, use guardrails with toeboards, safety nets, or personal fall arrest. Toeboards are barriers along the bottom of the guardrail.
- Before receiving materials, check protection at the landing area. If a guardrail is removed to land a load and you must lean through the opening or out over its edge, personal fall arrest protection is required.

Know what warning lines and monitors mean

- A warning line is a line set up on the roof to mark off the area near the edge. For low-slope roofing, a warning line must be combined with guardrails, safety nets, personal fall arrest, or a safety monitor. Know which combination protects your work area.
- A safety monitor is a person assigned to watch the roofers and warn them of fall hazards. Using a monitor alone, without a warning line, is allowed only on low-slope roofs 50 feet wide or less. Never use that option on steep roofs.
- The monitor must warn workers who appear unaware of a fall hazard or act unsafely. Respond to the warning immediately; stop and clarify anything you do not understand.
- Do not use or store mechanical equipment in monitored roofing areas. Only roofers, or workers covered by a fall protection plan, may be in an area protected by a safety monitor.

Protect holes and report changes

- Holes, including skylights, more than 6 feet above lower levels require covers, surrounding guardrails, or personal fall arrest. Do not assume a skylight can support you.
- Guardrails around holes must protect every open side. Ladder access holes need a gate, or guardrails offset so no one can walk straight into the hole.
- When a material opening is not in use, cover it or restore guardrails on every open side. Stop and report missing protection before continuing nearby work.
- Remove fall arrest equipment from service right away after it takes a fall impact. It cannot be used again until a competent person inspects it and finds it undamaged and fit for reuse.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You arrive to deliver materials on a low-slope roof. A monitor is watching roofers, and a guardrail is missing beside the material opening. Someone waves you forward. What would you stop and confirm before entering or unloading?

Questions for the crew

1. Is a warning line alone enough?
2. What protection applies on a steep roof?
3. Who may enter a monitored roofing area?
4. What must happen when a material opening is no longer used?

| Confirm the roof protection, respect monitored areas, and stop when an edge or hole is left unprotected.

Sources: 29 CFR 1926.501, Duty to have fall protection; 29 CFR 1926.502, Fall protection systems criteria and practices

Drafted with AI for review by a competent person. Clever Rook writes from the official regulation text it cites, but it doesn't know your site. Check it against your conditions and your company's safety program before use. Not legal advice.

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REVIEWED BY (COMPETENT PERSON)

REVIEW DATE

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