Transcript

## Working at Heights

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[*Opening visual of slide text saying ‘Brought to you by Safe Work Australia Virtual Seminar Series’, seminars.swa.gov.au, ‘#virtualWHS’*]

**Narrator:**

Working at heights is one of the highest risk activities across the industry, and as roof tilers we have to live with and manage that risk daily.

Here are some key things to remember when working on a roof so that we all get to go home safely every day.

Step 1, pre-job assessment. As they say, preparation and pre-starts prevent pretty poor performance. So a key to starting any job, large or small, is to go through a thorough pre-start process. As part of the pre-start, make sure your crew are qualified, trained and experienced in what they will be asked to do, and that everyone is clear on what’s expected of them that day.

Check the site for any hazards and risks that could affect you, and make sure the best controls are put in place before you start working. Also check the weather conditions for the day, because they could impact your work depending on what stage you are at on the roof.

Make sure everyone in your crew is fully aware of and familiar with the emergency response plan in case someone does fall.

On new builds, physical fall protection must be in place and secure before getting on to the roof. Remember no fall protection, no start.

If you are going to be working on a roof with a pitch that is steeper than normal, make sure the correct extra controls are in place to keep you safe. If you are not sure, check with your supervisor before getting up on the roof. One question or one quick check could save your life.

Also if you’re working on a two storey building, make sure that all openings and penetrations inside the building are securely covered.

Lastly, make sure you’ve set up a no-go zone to prevent injury to ground workers from falling materials.

Step 2, getting to and from the roof. Once you are good to go, take care as you get up on to the roof. It’s important to wear footwear with good grip, and that the treads are as clean as possible to prevent slipping.

If you’re using a ladder, make sure you use the right ladder for the height of roof you are going to be working on, and that it’s set up correctly at the right access points. If you’re not sure, ask someone, or check the Safe use of Ladders video from the Roofing Tile Association of Australia available on your phone.

Step 3, working on the roof. On new builds you’re the most exposed to the risk of falling from the roof when you’re first marking out and fixing the battens. So when you first get on the roof, check that the trusses are secure, fully braced off and safe to walk on. If trusses are wider than 600 millimetres apart, additional controls are needed, so call your supervisor for advice.

Whenever possible, walk on the bottom cord of the trusses while you’re marking and laying your battens so the trusses themselves act as fall protection for you.

While you’re fixing the battens, look out for anything wrong with the batten that could become a weak spot. Fix your battens, starting at the bottom of the roof and working your way up. This provides extra fall protection as you move higher up the roof.

As you walk around the roof, remember to only stand on the junction where the batten crosses the truss before the tiles are laid, and once the tiles are laid, stand on the tile overlap to prevent them from breaking and losing your balance.

When working near the valleys, always walk on the battens or tiles, never on the valley irons themselves because they can be very slippery when wet.

Rolling out sarking is always a two person job. Always remember to place the shiny side down, and take extra care when rolling it out. Once the tiles are laid and pointing begins, make sure you don’t overfill your bedding buckets. No more than 15 kilograms is recommended.

By remembering and following these key steps when tiling a roof, we can all go home safely every day.

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[*Text: ‘Workers are qualified and competent’, ‘Control all hazards and risks’, ‘Walk on the bottom cord of trusses’, ‘Step only where the batten crosses the truss’, ‘Stand on the tile overlap when walking’, ‘Never walk on the valley irons’*]

Think smart before you start. Keep safety in mind. It will save your behind.

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