WHSE ALERT

Works During and Following a Storm Event

Guidance for Bay Building construction teams, estimators, and contractors who have management control of a workplace about controlling the risks following a major storm event.

Issue

There are a number of hazards that arise during and after a storm event. The following are issues that both contractors and Supervisors/Estimates are to take into account when attending an insured property following a major storm event.

Flooding – Accessing Site

The major cause of death during floods is from people entering or travelling through floodwater. This includes driving, riding and walking through floodwater and children playing in floodwater. Prior to attending a site monitor announcements made by the state emergency services. In general this is communicated via the local ABC radio station.

- Floodwater may be deeper or faster flowing than it appears and contain hidden snags or debris.
- Floodwater may contain chemicals, raw sewage, snakes, spiders and much more that could cause illness and even death.
- Roads and surfaces underneath floodwater often wash away, and may not be visible from the surface.
- Avoid entering flood water, on foot or in a vehicle. Flood water can contain raw sewage and contaminants, can conduct electricity, mask hidden hazards, and pose a serious hazard to health. It may be deeper, or moving faster, than you expect

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Pathogens in Flood Water

Storm water contains many pathogens that may affect the human body. Urban flood incidents induced by heavy rainfall in many cases entail flooding of combined sewer systems. These flood waters are likely to be contaminated and may pose potential health risks to workers exposed to pathogens in these waters. This can include Melioidosis, Leptospirosis, E-Coli, and Q-fever.

Tips to avoid infection

- Don't wade through water, even shallow water. If you must enter shallow water wear appropriate PPE – gum boots, gloves, and disposable overalls. Especially if the area has been directly affected by floodwaters.
- Try to avoid contact with mud and dirt.
- Septic tanks may need to pumped out if inundated with water
- Always wash your hands with soap and water before handling food, and after handling items that may have been in contact with water or soil.

Stagnant Water

Within a week of a flood event, mosquito populations can explode. Mosquitoes will lay their eggs in any stagnant water they find, something that will be in abundance immediately after a storm-driven flood. As well many other biting insects maybe present trying to escape rising water. Mosquitoes carry many diseases the most common in Australia being Ross River fever, Murray Valley

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Encephalitis, Barmah Forest Virus, and Dengue Fever (North Queensland).

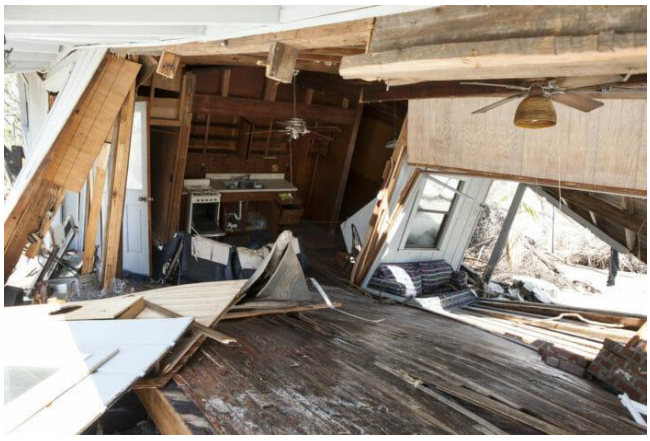
There are several simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes:

- wear insect repellent whenever mosquitoes are present
- wear long, loose, light-coloured clothing

Accessing a Flood Inundated Property

Do not enter the property until you are advised that it is safe to do so by emergency services, utilities companies, and the building is structurally sound. Before entering the property after a flood, consider the following hazards:

- Electrical hazards could exist, such as live power lines that may be down or active solar panels
- Water could potentially be live as covering GPO outlets
- Buildings and other structures may be unstable to enter or walk over
- Sewerage services may be disrupted, causing health risks



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Contractors Undertaking Make-Safes

Whilst in many instances Make-Safe work is not considered to be construction work it is recommended that the following occur prior to work commencing:

- Identify any hazards that may impact work
- Assess if the property is safe to enter and has been handed over by emergency services.
- Identify any overhead power lines and in-running services cables if work maybe occurring near to these cables (within 3m). Isolate the power if required especially when a storm event has impacted the premises wiring.
- Identify if there are asbestos containing materials (ACM) and notify the Bay Building or Insurer. If the ACM has been disturbed by the event isolate the work area to prevent access.
- Identify any penetrations within the roof structure e.g. sky lights, damaged roofing sections, and/or damaged materials. Identify controls measures to prevent falling through these penetrations e.g. fall mesh, guard railing.
- Prepare a safe work procedure (SOP) or Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) if the work is high risk construction work in line with relevant regulations
- Ensure all workers have the necessary licences and training for the work being performed e.g. work at height training for harness work, EWP licences, and certificates of competency.
- Contractors are to comply with relevant regulations when undertaking work at height and more information about the prevention of falls and the installation of fall prevention systems can be found at Safe Work Australia. We ask that you comply with the relevant regulations within your state however we do have some clients that require additional control measures and you should comply with these individual client requirements. Contractors are to quote for the additional control measures accordingly.
- Works at height occurring on an IAG insured site (NRMA Insurance, CGU, SGIO, SGIC, WFI and Swann Insurance) regardless of the size or duration of the work, IAG expect systems are in place to protect workers from the risks associated with work at height. This client's requirement is contractors who are accessing any type of roof (flat or pitched) for any duration is only possible with the implementation of higher fall control measures such as harness systems and physical fall protection measures. This directive is to be included into your SWMS and included in your quoting for work.

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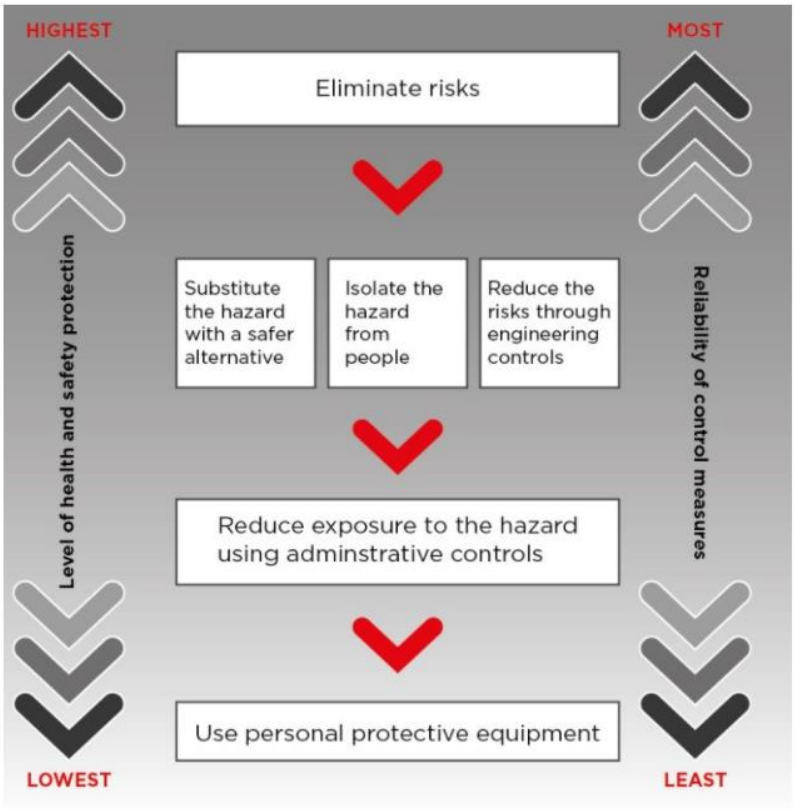
The starting point for the selection of a control measure is to determine if the work at height can be eliminated (e.g. can work occur on the ground) to administrative controls (e.g. no go zones). The hierarchy of control is outlined in the following figure and further information on how to control work at heights can be found at Safe Work Australia: https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/heights



Where control measures cannot be implemented in line with your SOP's or SWMS contact is to be made with Bay Building

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Roof Guard Rail – installed for roof works such as solar panel install, roof installation (metal and tile), and repairs. It comes in various types with under eve uprights, clamped to roof surface (metal), and screwed into the roof trusses.

Balcony Guard Railing

Works on a balcony require fall protection such balcony guard rail. When works are occurring using a ladder on a balcony the balcony guard railing will need to be sufficiently high to prevent a fall over the balcony.

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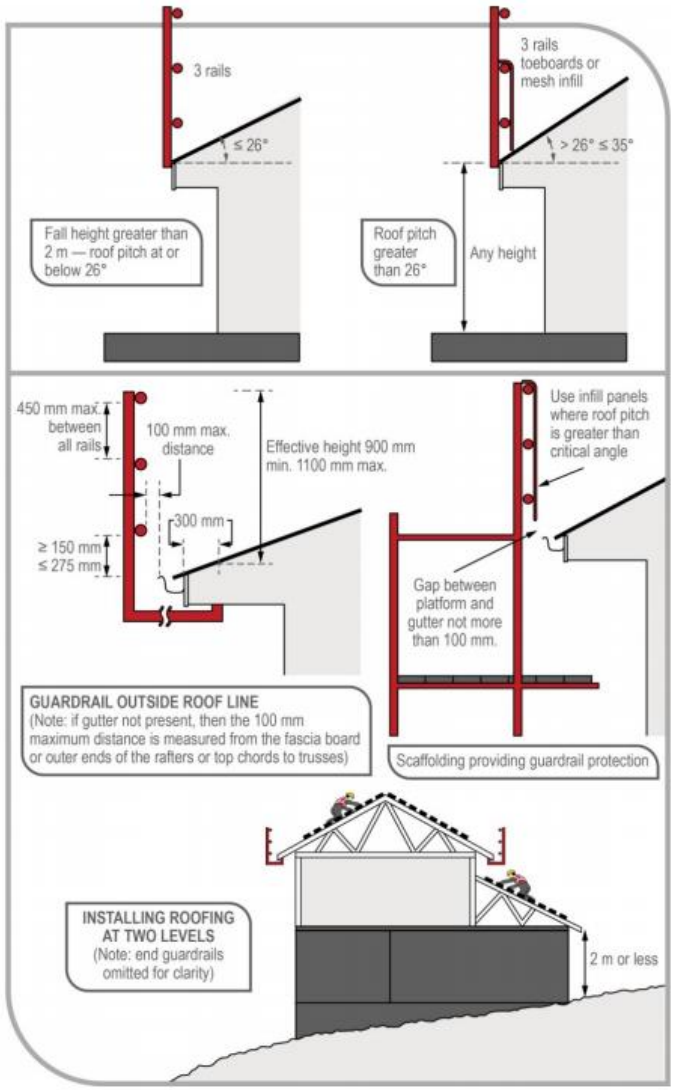
Guard railing Systems for Roof Work

Roof guardrail is an effective control measure for work at heights:

- To be installed by competent installer and certificate provided
- Assess roof for pitch and install mesh in fill if required.
- Access points to be identified for installation of ladders.



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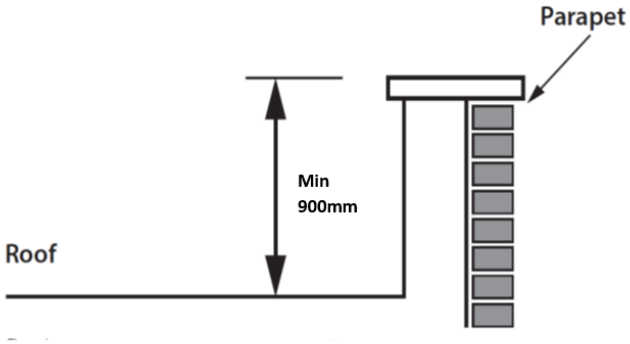
Fixed Structures - Parapets

Works on roof structures with parapets need to assessed for the height of the parapet (900mm) and the integral strength of the parapet e.g. timber versus brick/steel. Parapets below 900mm will require additional fall control measures such as guard railing or ground up guard rail.



Work Positioning Systems

The use of a work positioning system
must only be considered if it is not reasonably practicable to carry out work on the ground or on a solid construction, or by physical fall prevention device as, for example an elevating work platform (EWP).

- Users, including supervisors, should undertake a relevant competency based course of training before using a work positioning system.
- Users should be competent in the technique and possess a suitable attitude for working at height, including a responsible attitude to safety.
- Operators should be fit to perform the work and not be affected by alcohol or drugs including prescribed medication which may affect or impair their ability to work at height.
- Work positioning systems are to be inspected by a competent person every 6 months.
- Emergency response measures are to be assessed and put into place to address recovery of a person using a fall arrest system.

There are two types of harness work positioning systems:

- Fall restraint where the harness system is designed to prevent a worker coming near to an unprotected edge.
- Fall arrest systems are intended to safely stop a worker falling an uncontrolled distance and reduce the impact of the fall.

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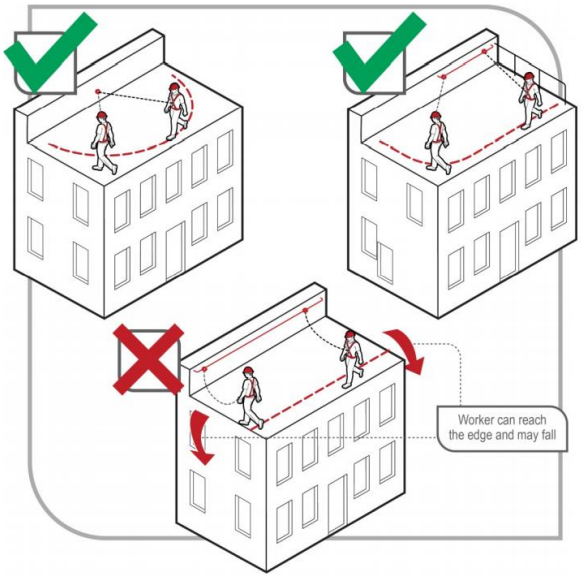
Fall Restraint

Fall restraint technique controls a person's movement by physically preventing the person from reaching a position at which there is a risk of a fall. It consists of a harness connected by a lanyard to a suitable anchorage point or static line. This equipment must be set up to prevent the worker from reaching an unprotected edge from where a fall may occur (following figure). Workers must be trained in its use, and equipment is to be installed by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.



Fall Arrest

When using fall arrest systems, the following key safety measures should be observed:

- Fall arrest equipment is selected, installed and used correctly. Workers should be trained in the use of fall arrest equipment.
- The equipment and anchorages are designed, manufactured and installed to be capable of withstanding the force applied to them as a result of a person's fall.
- The system is designed and installed so that the person travels the shortest possible distance before having the fall stopped.

Equipment used for individual fall arrest systems should be designed, manufactured, selected and used in compliance with AS/NZS 1891(set)2 : Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices.