

Spot The Safety Violation: Santa's Not the Only One on Snowy Rooftops



In addition to their shovels, what other equipment should these workers be using'

Falls from heights, such as roofs, are one of the most common safety hazards. Roofs are especially hazardous when they're covered with snow and ice, like the roof in this picture. So it's even more important for these workers to be using

appropriate fall protection.

It's important to clear snow and ice off of the roofs of your workplace facilities. A lot of snow, particularly if it's heavy and wet, can compromise the roof's structural integrity. And ice dams can keep melting snow from draining off the roof, causing leaks inside.

But clearing snow and ice off a roof can be hazardous.

Footing may be slippery, making falls more likely. And if the weight of the snow has weakened the roof's supports, the added weight of workers and equipment may be too much and lead to a roof collapse, which is what happened to the [roof at the Minnesota Viking's football stadium](#).

So make sure your workers follow these tips when they clear your workplace's roofs of snow:

- Try to clear as much of the snow as possible from the ground.
- Never spray water on the roof to try to clear the snow—it'll just freeze and make a bad situation worse. Instead, use a deicing chemical.
- Never step on a sloped roof in wintertime, or even a flat, icy roof, without fall prevention, such as covers, screens, railings or guardrails, in place.
- If you must work on a roof, wear fall protection (a full-body harness, lanyard, connectors and appropriate anchorage points) and slip-resistant footwear.
- Never sit on, lean against or step on a skylight lens or any covering placed over a hole on the roof. (Here's more information on protecting workers from [falls through openings](#).)

You should also [make sure workers shovel snow from the rest of your workplace](#), including walkways, the parking lot and the loading docks. Make sure workers use [proper snow shoveling techniques](#) so they don't get hurt or have a [heart attack](#).