



FRAGILE ROOFS

What Building Occupiers, Owners and Managing Agents Need to Know About Their Responsibilities

Definition of a Fragile Roof

- A roof must be considered fragile if it, or the materials forming it, will not take a person's weight.
- This includes, old roof lights (possibly over painted), fibre and asbestos cement sheets, old or thin metal sheets, all glass panels, slates and tiles in poor condition.
- **If you are unsure then you must always treat a roof as though it is a fragile roof.**

Steps to Take to Meet Your Responsibilities

- Assume any roof is fragile unless you can prove it is not.
- Do not go onto a roof or allow anyone else onto the roof without the correct training, experience, and suitable safety equipment.
- Engage a specialist roofing company who have the training, experience, and correct equipment to access the roof safely. The RIDBA website ridba.org.uk offers a direct link to such specialists near you.
- Tasks such as clearing low level gutters, and unblocking downpipes can be done from the ground level, from a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) or, for very short duration work (30 mins max), a properly secured, footed and tied-off well-maintained ladder.
- **Ultimately, it is your responsibility to ensure that only fully trained and experienced people who understand the risks go onto a roof of any type and only then with suitable safety equipment for the task.**

Preparation for Maintenance

- Do not wait until your roof leaks or gutter overflows – plan maintenance to be carried out before problems arise and preferably during better weather in the summer. This not only is safer but quicker and more efficiently undertaken on the longer, dry days in summer.

- Allow sufficient time to plan the works.
- Check the contractor has produced a method statement and risk assessment for the whole works and that this is available on location before works commence and for the full duration of those works.
- Monitor the progress of the works and that the contractor is working in line with the method statement and risk assessment. If there is any doubt, cease works at once and review accordingly.

Employing a Recognised and Competent Contractor

- Ensure you are clear about the works that you want done and when you want them done.
- If possible, specify non-fragile assemblies.
- Only consider contractors that have the necessary training and experience. Once again, reference to the RIDBA website will put you in touch with suitable contractors near you.
- Ensure the quotation for the works is written, includes everything you have asked for and includes provision for safety equipment suitable for the task as well as the provision of a method statement and risk assessment.
- Ask for references and follow them up.
- Allow the contractor enough time to carry out the works safely.
- Always challenge and stop works that do not comply with the method statement or seem unsafe.

Further Information

Health and safety in roof work HSG33 (fifth edition) HSE Books 2020

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg33.pdf>

Safe working on fragile roofs or roofs with fragile elements ACR (CP) 002: 2017 (third edition) The Green Book) Advisory Committee for Roofsafety

<https://www.the-acr.org/publications/the-green-book/>

Planning minor works Information Sheet No 3: 2017 Advisory Committee for Roofsafety

<https://www.the-acr.org/publications/is3-minor-roof-works/> (aimed at clients and building owners).

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