# Best practices for roof work safety

This guide explains best practices for working on roofs, detailing how to ensure safety from the start of the project to its completion, in compliance with laws and regulations. The guide offers advice to construction clients, employers, and workers who will be performing roof work.

Legislation: Chapter 17 [‘Work at heights’ of the Regulations Concerning the Performance of Work](https://www.arbeidstilsynet.no/regelverk/forskrifter/forskrift-om-utforelse-av-arbeid/3/17/) (forskrift om utførelse av arbeid, kapittel 17. Arbeid i høyden).

## Precautions before starting work

First of all, employers and workers must conduct a risk assessment. Based on this assessment, the employer should implement safety measures. If the work is not covered by standard procedures, a specific risk assessment should be made, even for short-term tasks. The assessment must always be carried out by or in cooperation with the workers. This must be documented, for example, through a safety job analysis.

## Considerations for risk assessments

* The height of the work and the risk of falls.
* Factors affecting the choice of fall protection measures, including the nature and duration of the work, the surface, risk of landslides, etc.
* The load on work equipment or platforms.
* Ergonomics.
* Access and evacuation routes.
* Traffic conditions.
* Weather conditions and other hazards at the site.

This should result in measures that reduce risks during roof work.

Employers must prioritise collective fall protection over personal protective equipment (PPE).

## Training

Workers performing roof work need adequate knowledge, skills, and experience to work safely. When scaffolding is used, they must undergo the required training for assembly, modification, dismantling, and use. This also applies to the use of personal fall protective equipment. Training must be documented.

## Planning

The employer should select the best-suited work equipment to ensure collective safety and maintain safe working conditions at all heights.

The construction client must ensure that safety, health, and working environment (SHE) are considered throughout the project, from planning to execution. Collective safety should be the standard approach.

Legislation: Construction Client Regulations (Byggherreforskriften).

## Best practices for safety measures

### Safe access

* Stair towers, external stairs, or internal ladders in scaffolding are considered safe access to the work area.
* Secure anchoring, proper foundation, guardrails, and flooring are required.
* Ladders can be used for inspections.
* Lifts should not be used for access.

### Emergency exit

* There should always be an emergency exit.
* Ladders can serve as an emergency exit in addition to safe access for heights under 6.0 meters.
* The ladder should extend at least 1.0 meter above the access level and be secured at top and bottom.

### Work safety

* For roof work with the risk of falling more than 2.0 meters, workers must always be protected against falls. Safety measures should be considered even for lower heights. A risk assessment must be carried out.
* Collective protection measures, such as guardrails or scaffolding, are a requirement.
* Guardrails should be at least 1.0 meter high and include a handrail, knee rail, and toe board.
* Guardrails must withstand the maximum calculated load from a potential fall.

Openings, roof windows, etc., must be secured with guardrails or covered with sturdy materials securely fastened.

Roof work should be conducted safely, and collective protection measures given priority.

## Minimum requirements for best practice

### **Guardrail strength**

Guardrails must withstand the expected load. Wooden guardrails should have minimum dimensions of 48\*98 with a maximum span of 2.4 meters. Joints should not be made between posts.

### **Securing the work area**

The entire work area must be secured, including access routes, transport paths, work areas, and storage places.

### **Flat roof work area demarcation**

The part of the work area that is more than 2.0 meters from the edge of the roof can be demarcated with equipment other than roof protection. The drawn-in marking must be solid enough to withstand harsh weather conditions, such as a plank or fence, and be at least 1.0 meters high.

### **Sloped roof work area demarcation**

For slopes over 6 degrees, secure the lower edge of the work area and gable end. Other areas can be marked as described above.

### Safety when working on other types of roofs

Safety assessments must be conducted to identify hazards in each individual case for roofs with a steep slope or long distance to the roof edge. Personal protective equipment may be used in addition to guardrails or scaffolding if necessary.

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| Stair tower – Hatch – Escape route |

## Use of personal fall protective equipment

### Fall prevention methods should be prioritised

Use personal fall protective equipment when assembling or dismantling scaffolding and guardrails.

There must be anchor points on the roof, installed according to regulations. Personal fall protective equipment must undergo annual checks and be suitable for the specific task. Use equipment as instructed. At least two people should be present at the site.

A rescue plan must be in place.

This text is based on the RVO brochure “Best praksis for sikring ved arbeid på tak” in Norwegian:

[Arbeid på tak (rvofond.no)](https://rvofond.no/ba/hms/arbeid-pa-tak)