Solar Installation – Fall from roof

7 January 2020

Incident overview

An apprentice electrician fractured his pelvis and vertebrae after falling more than three metres from a roof while installing solar panels at a construction site in Parklea.

Worker fell from the roof of the building.

The investigation

- SafeWork NSW inspectors responded to the incident.
- SafeWork NSW commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident.

Safety information

Businesses are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with the provisions of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

Businesses must implement ‘reasonably practicable’ control measures to manage the risks associated with falls from roofs. Make sure:

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- you work from the ground or on a solid construction, wherever possible
- before accessing the roof, you:
  - plan the work and use the right equipment to access the roof
  - discuss the work with all workers
  - check the condition of the roof and type of roofing material
- the roof is dry and clean
- workers have a safe means of access and egress to work areas
- a fall prevention device – temporary work platform, edge protection, guardrails or scaffolding
  - is used and workers know how to use them
- a fall-restraint or fall-arrest system – harness, lifeline or industrial safety net – is only used when edge protection or work platforms are not reasonably practicable
- you securely cover and mark, or edge protect, all open penetrations in the roof
- ladders are placed at a ratio of 1:4 to the wall, secured at the top and bottom, and extended at least one metre above the roof edge – and you always maintain three points of contact
- you consider using an elevating work platform or scaffolding instead of a ladder
- your workers always use equipment properly.

More information
- Video safety alert – Solar Installation – risks of falls
- Code of practice for managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Code of practice for managing the risk of falls in housing construction
- Construction falls from heights safety checklist (for principal contractors and site supervisors)
- Video safety alert – Solar Installation – electrical risks

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