

Roof Access Program

Work Aid — Rev. 1 (August 2024)

Facilities

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Version Control Table

Version Number	Owner	Approver	Change Summary	Status
1	Facilities	Facilities	New	Approved

1. Document Background

Purpose and Scope

This document is a supplement to the [Working at Heights Procedure](#) and applies to all buildings and structures owned and operated by the University of Ottawa where rooftop access is required by any person for any reason. This document does not supersede legislative requirements; rather, it is intended as a work aid to be used as part of the University of Ottawa's occupational health and safety management system.

This work aid sets acceptable health and safety standards for access to all uOttawa rooftops. For work in a fall hazard zone or requiring fall prevention and fall protection, see the [Working at Heights Procedure](#).

For third party rooftop access requests and questions or concerns regarding the content of this document, email the senior specialists, occupational health and safety, Facilities, at prs.safety@uOttawa.ca.

Terms and Definitions

For occupational health and safety terms and definitions that apply to documents within the management system, see the [OHS Glossary](#).

Additional terms and definitions specific to this procedure are listed here.

Authorized person — A person who has been granted access to a uOttawa rooftop for survey, worksite supervision or photography purposes, or other reasonable circumstances, at the discretion of Facilities management. Authorized uOttawa personnel must have valid working at heights three-year certification.

Vendor — An individual or organization hired by the University of Ottawa based on a contract for a specific project or job for a specific period of time. May be considered a contractor, consultant, etc.

Fall hazard — An area in which a fall of 3 m (10 feet) may occur or an area where a fall from a height of less than 3 m (10 feet) can result in a greater risk of injury.

Fall hazard zone — Also referred to as a leading edge. Refers to an area of 2 metres (6 feet) from all edges of an unguarded rooftop (without a parapet or an engineered guardrail). Work conducted within a fall hazard zone requires a travel restraint or a fall arrest system (refer to [Working at Heights Procedure](#)).

Flat rooftop — A rooftop with no pitch or uneven surfaces.

Guardrail — A device used to prevent a person from falling off an elevated surface. Guardrails must have a top rail located not less than 91 cm (36 inches) and not more than 107 cm (42 inches) above the surface to be guarded (according to [Ontario Regulation 851 from Industrial Establishments](#)). Guardrails must have a mid-rail located between the top rail and the guarded surface. Depending on the work performed, a toe-board that extends from the surface to be guarded to a height of at least 12.5 cm may be required.

Parapet — A vertical extension of a wall along the edge of a rooftop. A parapet may serve as a suitable guardrail provided it meets the minimum requirements (refer to “Guardrail”).

Pitched rooftop — A rooftop with peaked and/or angled, uneven walking surfaces.

Work — The required task(s) to be performed while on a campus rooftop. This may include construction, repairs, inspections, maintenance or cleaning, as well as emergency work.

Working at heights — Work conducted on an elevated surface where the hazard of falling is present, and the fall is 3 metres or more below the worker’s standing position.

Training/certification — Refers to a working at heights course as delivered by a Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)-approved training provider.

Responsibilities

With respect to this work aid, the responsibilities of supervisors and workers are detailed in the [health and safety program manuals](#) as well as [Administrative Procedure 14-1](#).

In addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined in Procedure 14-1, additional responsibilities specific to this procedure include, for the following groups:

Facilities managers, supervisors, lead hands and project managers (uOttawa representatives)

- Conduct a hazard identification and risk assessment (HIRA) prior to assigning work. Refer to the [HIRA procedure](#).
- Share the information contained in this procedure and identified in the HIRA with all affected persons.
- Monitor and ensure that safe work practices are being followed.
- Ensure that all persons requesting rooftop access provide compliant records of training relevant to their scope of work and the requirements in this work aid.
- Evaluate and approve (as applicable) requests to access a rooftop. Share approvals (where applicable) with Protection Services for key access.

Facilities employees

- Report to their supervisor or project manager, as applicable, any health and safety-related concerns.
- Receive the required working at heights training.
- Understand the hazards and follow the proper mitigation measures.

Third parties and vendors

- Comply with uOttawa’s rooftop access requirements.
- If working at heights certification is required, keep proof of the certification on their person whenever accessing rooftop.

Protection Services

- Provide keys and/or electronic access cards to authorized persons in accordance with the Protection Services key procedure.

- Respond to emergency calls, and co-ordinate with emergency services when necessary.

Reference Documents

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 213/91 \(Construction Projects\)](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 297/13 \(Occupational Health and Safety Awareness and Training\)](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 851 \(Industrial Establishments\)](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 859 \(Window Cleaning\)](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 381/15](#)
- [General OHS Program Manual](#)
- [Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Procedure](#)
- University of Ottawa Fume hood Maintenance Procedure
- University of Ottawa [Lockout and Tag Out Procedure](#)

2. Resource Information

Resource information

These steps explain the rooftop access process:

1. Know the risks.
2. Meet the access requirements.
3. Complete the work.
4. Plan for emergencies.

Additional steps may be required based on the project or work scope.

STEP 1 Know the Risks.

Key activities

- Identify hazards and assess areas of risk by conducting a preliminary qualitative survey of the workspace with reference to the [Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Procedure](#).
- Identify legislative, University and manufacturer requirements for the work.
- Define, understand and apply reasonable hierarchal risk mitigation to protect workers.
- Ensure workers have suitable knowledge, training and experience.

Contextual details

Prior to the start of work, the supervisor must identify and evaluate current and potential hazards at the site by completing a [hazard identification and risk assessment](#), to determine if additional protective measures and equipment are required. The survey must include an evaluation of relevant hazards including, but not limited to, those presented in Appendix 2.

Special consideration should be given to unique hazards that are (or may become) present, such as building mechanical systems or environmental conditions. Based on the assessment findings, deficiencies must be prioritized and appropriately addressed.

Ongoing assessments must be conducted at least once a year or whenever the scope of work or physical workspace has changed significantly. The hazard identification and risk assessment (HIRA) will help identify the proper control or mitigation measures to be implemented in each situation. Use the hierarchy of controls when choosing methods to eliminate or control the hazards.

Any work conducted on a uOttawa rooftop within a fall hazard zone must follow the [Working at Heights Procedure](#).

A person may request assistance in conducting the HIRA of their work area at any time from their supervisor. The [Office of the Chief Risk Officer](#) may be contacted to assist, as necessary.

Building inventory

For space management programs, the full list of buildings is available in Archibus. You can also see the [less-detailed building table](#).

STEP 2 Meet the Access Requirements

Key activities

- Identify and meet the rooftop access requirements.

Contextual details

Rooftops are considered restricted spaces. No person is permitted to access a rooftop without proper authorization, training and/or hazard information. The authorization may be for a single or an indeterminate period. Those requiring access to a uOttawa rooftop for work and/or maintenance must refer to the procedure below and meet the following criteria:

1. To access uOttawa roofs, Facilities workers and vendors or service providers under contract with uOttawa must hold current working at heights certification from a ministry-approved training provider.
 - a. **Note:** For construction projects where rooftop access is part of the contracted work, constructors must produce working at heights certification for their employees and a rescue plan in accordance with O. Reg 213/91 and ensure those accessing their worksite also meet the requirements.
2. All other vendors or third parties not under contract with uOttawa must hold current working at heights certification from a ministry-approved training provider and must complete and submit the Rooftop Access Request Form (Appendix 1) to the operations safety specialist (prs.safety@uOttawa.ca) for rooftop access. These requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis for temporary access only.
3. All other uOttawa personnel and student employees requesting roof access under an exception for special circumstances must complete and submit to the Rooftop Access Request Form

(Appendix 1) to their supervisor and uOttawa safety specialist. These special requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis for temporary access only.

4. All parties must receive information on job-specific hazards and mitigation measures prior to accessing any uOttawa rooftops.

Access is provided via an assigned key set or by special request from a uOttawa representative to Protection Services, subject to the key sign-out procedure. University representatives should email Protection Services the list of approved persons with access to a rooftop and make the necessary arrangements for appropriate keys. The email must provide:

- Name(s) of the approved individual(s) accessing the rooftop, and their organization(s)
- Emergency telephone number(s) for the individual(s)
- Location, expected start and end times, and duration of the work and/or project
- Nature of the work being performed

If you require assistance in confirming training, contact the safety specialists or Office of the Chief Risk Officer.

STEP 3 Complete the Work

Key activities

- Understand the responsibilities of the authorized person while completing work on the rooftop.

Any individual accessing a uOttawa rooftop must always carry their key set and phone with them. Workers should certainly use the [SecurUO app](#) to monitor or report any incidents, and its [“WorkAlone” check-in feature](#).

The authorized person(s) must ensure the rooftop is secured against any unauthorized access. All access points must be verified as secure, ensuring that the door shuts behind them and is locked. Rooftop doors must always remain locked, even during work hours.

At the end of the day, material left on the rooftop must be secured to prevent movement, falls and property damage, and keys returned to Protection Services.

On completion of the work, the rooftop must be cleaned and returned to its pre-project state.

STEP 4 Plan for Emergencies

Key activities

- Understand the limitations associated with emergency response.

Consider establishing emergency procedures prior to accessing or working on a rooftop. Note that there are no warning systems on rooftops to indicate whether the building is under emergency or alarm. If, when re-entering the building from the roof, there's a fire alarm, remain on the rooftop and call for assistance, unless there's a designated stairwell for emergency exit.

In the event of an emergency while performing work on a rooftop, the authorized person(s) should contact Protection Services at 613-562-5411. Protection Services will co-ordinate rescue efforts with Emergency Services, as necessary.

Appendix 2 — Hazard Considerations and Mitigation Measures

Prior to beginning the work, the supervisor is responsible for completing a [hazard identification and risk assessment](#) (HIRA).

Many rooftops have dedicated pathways (denoted via different colour membranes, concrete paving stones, etc.). Use these pathways wherever possible to minimize risk of injury and extend the life of the roof membrane. Some rooftops also have pass-over stairs over the top of mechanical or electrical infrastructure. To prevent injury, always use pathways.

In addition to anticipated hazards associated with the work, other hazards may be present, under the following categories:

Physical conditions

The finish of a rooftop may present a hazard.

- loose aggregate, which may create a trip or fall hazard
- textured membrane, metal or wood surfaces, pass-over ramps or stairs, which can become slippery with repeated water accumulation and vegetation
- pathway or exit obstructions
- parapet or guardrail less than 91 centimetres (36 inches) qualifying a fall hazard zone

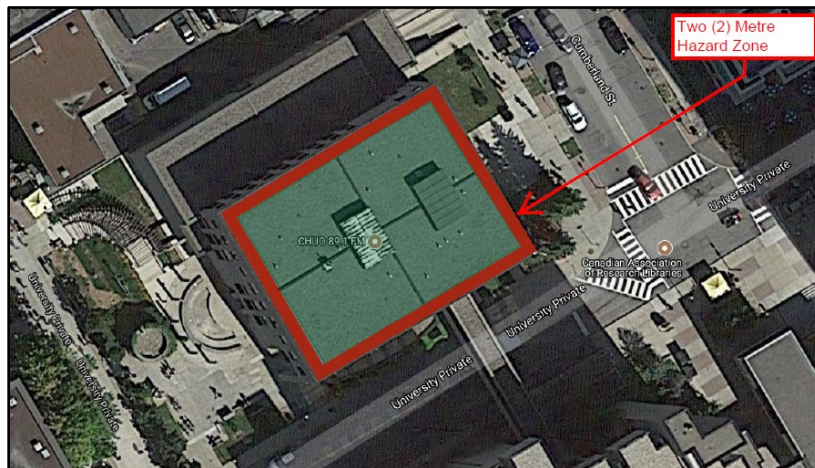


Figure 1 — Example of a fall hazard zone

General mitigation measures can include good housekeeping, preventative maintenance, barriers, designated pathways, anti-slip threads, handrails and protective footwear.

Environmental hazards

Environmental conditions may create hazardous circumstances:

- weather events (heavy wind gusts, freezing rain, snowstorms, thunder or lightning storms)
- low visibility (dense fog, night)

- periods of excessively hot and humid weather conditions, or activities involving highly strenuous physical exertion in excessively hot and humid conditions
- periods of excessively cold and humid weather

Rooftop access in these circumstances is strongly discouraged. However, if work can't be rescheduled, the SecurUO "WorkAlone" feature, barriers, lighting and/or heat or cold stress prevention procedures can be applied.

Surrounding elements may also result in hazardous situations.

Fume hood exhaust

Rooftop fume hoods should not pose a hazard so long as the work being performed doesn't include or coincide with fume hood maintenance. Refer to the Fume Hood Maintenance Program.

- Additional personal protective equipment may be required on certain buildings (e.g., the Science/Engineering precinct), depending on the hazard identification and risk assessment, the work area's specific requirements, etc. Such equipment may include but is not limited to:
 - Chemical-resistant PPE

EMF antennae

Some rooftops have antennas for cellular service. These areas are demarcated by a bump line including signage indicating the hazard (e.g., radiofrequency); workers must not cross the bump line. If access is required within the hazard zone, follow the Radio Frequency – Cell Tower Controlled Area Access procedure.

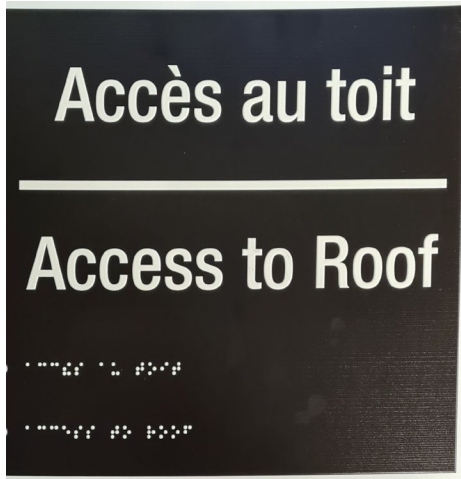
Skylights

Every skylight must be considered a fall hazard and should be clearly indicated. If work is being conducted near a skylight, measures such as fall prevention equipment, temporary guardrails or barriers, a temporary skylight screen, or a grate or cover capable of handling any load imposed by an authorized person must be implemented.

Solutions that protect all workers at once are preferable to personal protective equipment. Personnel working on a roof may require the following, which must meet or exceed applicable legislative requirements:

- Guardrails or barriers
- Signage
- Securing of area
- Isolating activities (e.g., lock-out tag-out)
- Travel restraint or fall arrest systems components
- Protective footwear
- Protective headwear
- Protective eyewear
- Respiratory protection
- Auditory protection
- Skin protection

Example of signage



Roof access sign



Authorized persons sign



Footwear sign



Fall hazard sign