

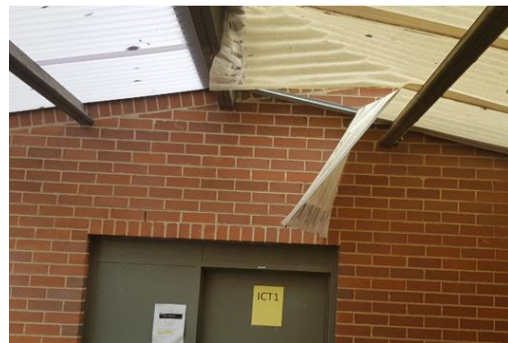
4/08/2020

# More workers falling through roofs in NSW

Since the start of this year, SafeWork NSW has been notified of 10 separate serious incidents where a worker has fallen through a roof, resulting in either a serious injury or fatality. Falls from heights continues to be a major cause of fatalities and serious injuries at workplaces across NSW.

## Sydney

A 52-year-old subcontractor has fallen 3.5 metres onto concrete pavement at a school in Wahroonga. The subcontractor was cleaning the roof gutters when he stepped onto polycarbonate roof sheeting which gave way causing him to fall through. He sustained severe head injuries in the fall and passed away in hospital.



*The site where the incident occurred at Wahroonga*

## Molong

Last month a 21-year-old apprentice carpenter fell through perspex roof sheeting at a manufacturing plant in central western NSW. He landed on the concrete floor 7 metres below, fracturing his wrist, ribs and pelvis.



*The shed where the carpenter fell, noting the perspex roof sheeting*

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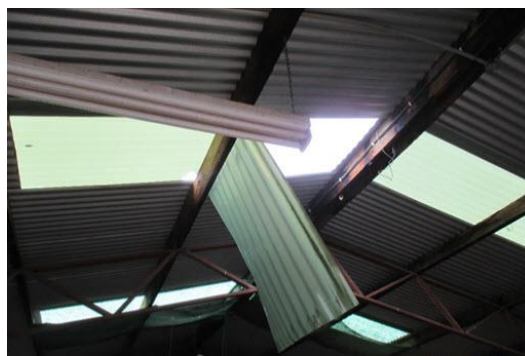
The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing and the findings are not yet confirmed. SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation in response to the incident to determine its cause and circumstances. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.

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### Alectown

In May, a 27-year-old roofing contractor fell 3.6 metres through a roof of a sheering shed on a rural property near Parkes. The worker was installing solar panels when the alsynite roof sheeting he was on gave way, the fall resulting in a fracture in his back.



*Roof sheet the worker fell through*

### Safety information

Not all areas on a roof are safe to walk on. Even roof sheeting that claims to be okay to walk on is reliant on correct installation and can become brittle over time. Don't walk on skylights, or plastic and asbestos roof sheeting, unless assessed as structurally sound by a competent person.

Consider what tasks can be done without accessing the roof. For example, work from underneath using a scaffold or elevated work platform.

If you must access the roof, check its condition, the roofing materials, fixings and safety mesh to determine the safest path.

If sheeting appears brittle, you must manage the risks of falling through the roof.

You must:

- install guardrails around non-trafficable areas, or use a work positioning system
- cover non-trafficable sheeting securely and place warning signs nearby
- work from temporary work platforms (crawling boards) or roof ladders, where appropriate
- install safety mesh
- use an adjustable fall-arrest system, such as a harness, with proper anchor points, and train workers in how to use them
- prepare a site specific safe work method statement (SWMS) for all high risk construction work

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## Incident Information Release

■ SAFework NSW ■

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- have plans in place in case of emergency, particularly with respect to the use of fall arrest systems

### More information

- [Code of practice for managing the risk of falls at workplaces](#)
- [Falls through skylights and plastic roof sheeting](#)
- [Working safely at heights](#)

View the latest incident information releases at [safework.nsw.gov.au](https://safework.nsw.gov.au)