



RISK CONTROL MEMORANDUM

To:	Catholic Diocese of Green Bay Parishes, Schools & Other Facilities
Attn:	Business Managers and Buildings & Grounds Committee
Date:	February 2012
From:	Gwendolyn Arps – Risk Control Consultant Direct Line: 920-431-6265 e-mail: gwendolyn.arps@aon.com
Re:	Snow Removal Safe Work Practice

During the winter months, there may be times when it's necessary to have work done on a snow-covered roof. If snow has accumulated, you may need to remove it to prevent roof collapse. Working on a snow-covered roof poses significant dangers, including serious falls and exposure to extreme cold.

These guidelines will help ensure that proper controls are in place to help minimize the risk of working on snow-covered roofs.

- A) **Planning and Preparation** - As you develop a plan for roof work under these special conditions, consider the following questions:
- ◆ *What special tools, equipment, protective devices, clothes and footwear will be needed?* Make sure all the necessary gear is on hand and ready for use.
 - ◆ *Do you have a means of safely elevating mechanized snow removal equipment to the roof?* Remember that employees will be working under adverse conditions during severe weather.
 - ◆ *What type of fall protection will you need?* Guardrails, nets, or a personal fall-arrest system for each worker may be needed, depending on roof configuration and existing fall protection already installed.
 - ◆ *Are there hazards on the roof that will be hidden from view by the snow?* Before the snow falls, mark skylights, roof drains, vents, and other hazards or obstructions so that workers will be able to see and avoid them.
 - ◆ *How will workers get on the roof?* Develop a plan for keeping all roof access points clear of snow.
- B) **Roof Access**
- ◆ If access is from the interior watch for snow build-up that may make the route impassable or lead to injuries when workers attempt to force the door open.
 - ◆ If access is from a fixed ladder on the building exterior, snow and ice may build up on ladder rungs and create a serious fall hazard. Observe the rung conditions, clear off snow and use a hammer to knock any ice off the rungs.



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Roof Access – Con't

- ◆ If using portable ladders, set them on stable footing at the proper angle to the building. The horizontal distance between the base of the ladder and the building should equal one-quarter of the working length of the ladder. Secure ladders at the top and base to prevent movement, and be sure they extend at least three feet above the roof.
- ◆ Regardless of the ladder type, use the “Three-Point System” keeping two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder at all times.
- ◆ Use a hand line or rope to hoist tools or shovels to the roof

C) Exposure to Cold

- ◆ Teach workers the warning signs of over exposure and hypothermia.
- ◆ Make regular temperature and wind chill checks to prevent workers from being exposed to the cold too long.

D) Mechanized Equipment Use for Snow Removal

- ◆ Read, understand, and follow all manufacturers’ instructions for the safe use of snow blowers and similar mechanical equipment.
- ◆ Check with a roofing contractor before using mechanized equipment on the roof to ensure the equipment will not damage the roof membrane.
- ◆ Melting the snow in lieu of removal may cause localized overloading of the roof. Check with a structural engineer before using water or heating device to melt the snow.

E) Other Important Guidelines

- ◆ Keep ice and snow away from drain areas on roofs by clearing a path from the roof center to the drains.
- ◆ Be careful when walking on roofs to avoid surface damage and falls.
- ◆ Never attempt to melt ice from drains or roof surfaces with blow torches or similar devices

*Content from Liberty Mutual

This and other Risk Control Memorandums are also available on the Diocese website at:

<http://www.gbdioc.org/facilities-a-properties.html>