



# Safety Alert

## BRITTLE ROOF MATERIAL

issued by Workcover NSW

**16 October 2006**

Workover NSW Chief Executive officer, Jon Blackwell, today issued a *Safety Alert* on brittle roofing material, following two recent serious incidents where workers fell more than 10 meters.

“Preliminary investigations by WorkCover inspectors have found that the contractors were working on brittle and fragile roof panels which did not have safety mesh installed beneath them, “said Mr Blackwell.

“Under NSW occupational health and safety legislation, employers must take all reasonable care to identify all foreseeable hazards associated with working at heights”, he said.

**Before work commences a site survey should be conducted to identify any hazardous areas**, such as brittle roofing material and skylights, and these should be clearly identified by warning signs, and measures taken to prevent access to them.

“The survey is extremely important, as it relates to the presence and adequacy of safety mesh. For older buildings, it is likely that safety mesh will not be present”, said Mr Blackwell.

“Where it is physically impossible to deny access to these areas, a fall arrest system, including safety harnesses and effective anchorage points, must be used ,” he said .

Working platforms and walkways should also be provided for workers to work from safely and gain access to the work area, and these should also be guarded or protected by fall arrest system.

“As a part of a continuing campaign to prevent falls from heights, WorkCover issued a similar Safety Alert 12 months ago and has also issued a *Code Of Practice: Safe Work On Roofs*”, said the WorkCover CEO.

The Safety Alert and further information on falls from heights is available on the WorkCover website [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au). If you have any concerns about this issue on YOUR site, please call Dick Whitehead on 0411-266287.

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