

Skylights and Sloped Glazing are Not Walking Surfaces

The use of skylights and sloped glazing systems continues to grow in popularity as architects and building owners use these fenestration systems to bring natural daylight further into homes, schools, medical facilities, commercial offices and retail stores. In order to ensure human safety and long-term performance of skylights and sloped glazing systems, construction workers, maintenance professionals and others must be aware that the systems typically are not designed or intended to be used as walking surfaces.

Installation and maintenance of skylights and sloped glazing systems require special consideration to minimize the potential for serious injury or death. While architectural flat glass can be designed and engineered for use as a walking surface, glass typically used in skylights and other sloped glazing applications is rarely designed to support the concentrated weight of live loads such as a human standing or walking on the glass or temporary equipment or structures used in installation, cleaning or maintenance. During installation, cleaning and maintenance, work should be performed from secured temporary platforms supported by structural components of the building. While glazing constructions may appear strong enough to support installers or maintenance personnel, glass is subject to sudden breakage.

Walking or standing on glass may also result in damage less visible than immediate breakage. Surface or edge damage can decrease the strength of the glass and affect the long-term ability of the glass to withstand wind and snow loads.

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