

Suggested Procedures for Dealing with Broken Glass

Introduction

Glass can break after installation for many reasons, including accidental impact, severe weather events, vandalism and improper glazing conditions. Regardless of the type of glass, broken glass can pose a risk of injury and property damage; therefore, steps should be taken to secure the area around broken glass and replace damaged glass with the appropriate products.

Risks Associated with Broken Glass

Architectural glass is designed for a low probability of breakage - generally a probability not to exceed the breakage of 8 lites out of 1,000 at design loading conditions. When glass breaks, it no longer has the integrity to support the loads for which it was designed and it needs to be replaced.

Glass is specified based on its intended use. For example, the building codes require safety glazing in designated hazardous locations to protect people from glass-related injuries. In many hurricane-prone areas, impact-resistant glazing is required. It is important to note that broken glass loses its strength and will not offer the original intended level of performance even if it remains in its frame.

Glass Replacement

There are several steps to take when replacing broken glass:

- Advise the building owner, property manager or maintenance department, or work directly with the homeowner
- Block off the area around the broken glass to prevent glass-related injuries
- Begin an immediate cleanup and replacement of the broken glass

Removal of broken glass should be performed by a professional glazier who understands the dangers of handling broken glass and is familiar with the retention of glass in the framing system and the necessary steps needed to for its safe removal. Workers should use proper protective equipment such as, but not limited to, gloves and eye protection.

When the cause of breakage is in question, it is recommended that photographs be taken to assist in determining the cause of breakage and broken glass fragments are retained for closer examination by glass professionals.

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