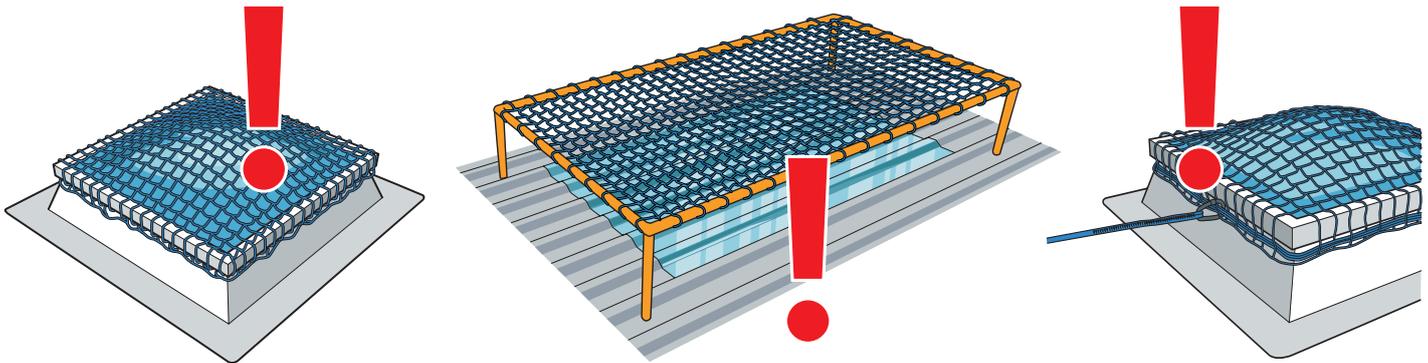


ROOFLIGHT SAFETY NETS: BE AWARE OF LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIAL DANGERS



These practices are potentially a danger to life.

Safety netting has played an important role in the construction industry for many years. Usage of nets conforming to BS EN 1263-1 in underslung applications is supported by:

- HSE (Health & Safety Executive)
- ACR (Advisory Committee for Roofsafety)
- FASET (Fall Arrest Safety Equipment Training)

These organisations provide detailed guidance on its correct and safe application.

However, more recently, safety netting products are being offered for use over rooflights, as a means of fall arrest in the event of a person falling onto a rooflight which may be classed as 'fragile roof'.

Some manufacturers' installation instructions show nets being secured over an out-of-plane rooflight by means of a ratchet strap to the upstand, or freestanding unfixated and unsecured temporary framework.

Any freestanding safety frameworks used over rooflights of any kind should be appropriately tested, suitable for the application and adequately restrained in position to avoid displacement in the event of a trip or fall.

In addition, and of even greater concern, we have seen netting manufacturers showing roofwork restraint safety lines wrongly labelled as 'fall arrest systems' and anchored to rooflight upstands which are in turn anchored to rooflight upstands.

- Typical rooflight upstands are not designed, tested or attached to the roof in such way as to be able to provide reliable anchorage for a safety net or safety line of any kind. BS EN 1263-2 states that instruction manuals for these products must contain required anchorage forces.
- Anchorage points for roofwork safety nets must comply with the requirements of BS EN 1263-2 and BS 8411, and safety lines must comply with BS EN 795 and should be clearly labelled as such. Rooflights are rarely designed and tested to be used as anchorage points so should not be used for this purpose.
- In the event of a fall onto a net secured on a rooflight upstand, the rooflight frame may be subjected to a load which could damage or even dislodge it, resulting in the net being released.
- The design, age or condition of any given rooflight may not be properly understood by the operative on the roof. These are factors which may determine the integrity of the anchorage.
- The training, supervision, inspection & certification of these products is not subject to the same requirements as other, more established fall arrest systems.

The Rooflight Association strongly advises against the use of rooflight safety nets, unless conformity with manufacturers' required anchorage force are met and can be validated. If no such information is available, products such as these should not be used. For safe access and roofwork practices please refer to HSE, ACR and FASET guidance.