



Pennsylvania • Ohio • North Carolina

Roof Access, Use and Safety

By Kurt Baumgartner

As a building owner, property manager or other interested party you should realize your roof should “keep out” a lot more than just “the elements.”

Your roof may be a place for all kinds of maintenance operations. Workers may attempt to access your roof for mounting of various types of equipment, holiday decorations and advertisements. It may even be an attractive space for a whole world of activities.

Most people don't even consider the implications of people being on their roof, or what liability they might incur from such activity. The first consideration any prudent person should contemplate is how the roof is accessed.

Some building owners and managers may not have a clue how to get on the roof, and leave it to the person desiring access to determine how to get there. This is a big mistake. You are responsible

for anyone on your roof. You should know why they are there and what they are doing.

There are many ways to access a roof. We will describe some of them here.

- **Ladders.** Everyone is familiar with ladders. If your roof is low enough, it might be accessed by a ladder. Anything 35 feet or lower can be accessed by a ladder - including people you may not want on your roof. Ladder access is the least desirable way to get on a roof and the most dangerous. You have no control over this type of access and may be liable for any injuries that might occur. Any persons conducting service work or work-for-hire must provide you with a certificate of insurance including workman's compensation, regardless of how they access the roof.
- **Outside access other than ladder.** These are usually fire escapes or other typed of dual-use access. Though better than ladders, they may permit roof access without permission.
- **Roof hatches.** These are inside openings, usually located in a maintenance room or other out-of-the-way location. They are equipped with a permanently-attached ladder, or in some large, expensive models a stair case. These are capable of being locked and are easily monitored by whomever can unlock them. They can be equipped with safety poles and rails to make accessing the roof much safer, and since they are usually located only one floor below the roof the height is as low as possible.
- **Penthouse doors.** This type of roof access is the most desirable and the least common, but a lot of large industrial buildings have them. They make the movement of equipment and materials onto the roof much easier.

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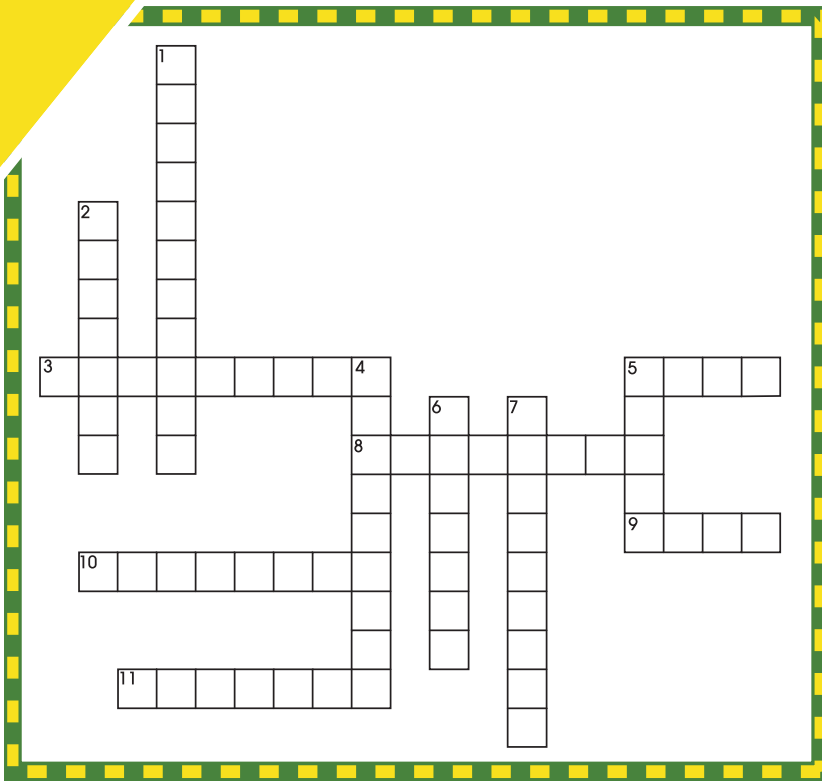
Roof Access Cris-Cross Puzzle

Across

3. Enclosed space on the rooftop
5. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning
8. Do not allow
9. Damage
10. Christmas, New Years, Kwanza, etc.
11. Error

Down

1. Forever attached
2. Wise
4. Costly
5. "Down the ____"
6. Laborers
7. Financial risk if you're at fault



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- **Access by mechanical equipment.** This is access by forklifts, man lifts or some other mechanical device. This type of access is strictly regulated by government entities and should be left to qualified, trained individuals. The insurance requirements mentioned above are particularly important here.



The next consideration is who is going on the roof and why. There may be a wide variety of people who either need or want to be on the roof. Some of these include:

- **Roof mechanics** repairing leaks, performing maintenance or engaging in re roofing.
- **Other trades** working on HVAC equipment, communications equipment or any number of things from A to Z. They should be cautioned about the delicacy of the roof and instructed to immediately report any damage, no matter how small, so proper repairs may be made.
- **Advertizing** or other types of decorations, such as Christmas lights. These folks are usually the least informed about the precautions that need to be taken on the roof. They sometimes

attach things directly to the roof, penetrating it or otherwise damaging it, and are not aware that they are causing harm.

- **People wanting to use the roof for recreation** or observation. Rooftops are a great place to observe any of a number of things, from weather to fireworks - if you have a professional baseball stadium nearby, you know what I am talking about! Roofs may be used for employee breaks, gatherings, even Bar-B-Ques. These all come with potential to damage the roof. Some employers require their workers to take smoke breaks on the roof. I can't tell you the number of cigarette burns I have repaired on single-ply roofs.

The point of all this is simple: Know what type of roof access you have and consider changing it if it will give you more control. Your roofing professional can assist you in this. A roof hatch to take the place of a ladder is an inexpensive option.

Know who is on your roof and why. It is vital to document every time someone accesses the roof. A simple "sign in/sign out" or log sheet that keeps track of names and/or other identifying info, and the date and time of entry and exit, will help determine who is responsible should damage show up later.

If you allow employees or others to use your roof for other-than-essential purposes, establish strict guidelines (including safety precautions) that prohibit persons near the perimeter and/or on sensitive roof membranes where no walkways are present. If any of these types of activity are going to occur, it is essential that you contact your roofing professional to help you establish rules and provisions for any type of rooftop activity.

Kurt Baumgartner is chief technical advisor for the Midwest Roofing Contractors Association.

Seven Touch Points of Communication



There are seven touch points of communications that can have you fouling up enhancing a business (or personal) relationship. Do you know what they are?

Touch Point #1 – The telephone. Surveys show that more than 80% of all business transactions involve a phone call at some point. Tone of voice is critical. Two people can say the same thing to one person; and yet the listener can hear it differently from each.

Touch Point #2 – Email. Email etiquette needs to be short, sweet and to the point. Plus it needs to be obviously friendly. Many hurt feelings have come about due to insensitive writing. That's a good place to practice all your "please and

thank you's." Short, terse, one-word answers are perceived as 'rude' in any touch point. And as they say: "Don't put anything in an email you wouldn't want in the daily newspaper."

Touch Point #3 – Voice mail. There are three types of voice mails: poor, average, and great. When you leave a voice mail, make it a great one. Use your tone of voice. The caller can hear the laughter, the smile and the tone. Use it to your advantage. Remember, too, voice mail was not made to hold conversation - Ask a question; get an answer.

Touch Point #4 – U.S. mail. The written word can be miscommunicated very easily. So email, voice mail and the US Postal Service are all are 'asynchronous.' You will wait for an answer.

Touch Point #5 – The fax machine. Remember when that method of communicating came on the scene? Seems we didn't know how we operated without it. And today, it trails sadly behind the other touch points. One-way information; waiting for an answer. And again, watch what

you put on paper! It could come back to haunt you.

Touch Point #6 – Face-to-face communications. When we communicate face-to-face we have it all. Sight, sound, tone of voice, facial expressions, body language – the entire package. It is the ultimate 'synchronous' touch point. And yet, still, with all those helpful items, we still continue to 'miscommunicate.'

Touch Point #7 – Instant Messaging (IM). While this method of communication isn't quite yet in the mainstream, it is being used. However, 90% of all IM's end up in a phone call. Instant messages may not be read right away. Be careful what you put into messages. They can turn into an embarrassment for some.

So in this wonderful world of communications, you can see how it's so easy to miscommunicate. In our workplace, we probably use all seven touch points many times a day.

(Source: Nancy Friedman, Telephone-Doctor.com)



A diplomat is a man who always remembers a woman's birthday but never remembers her age.

-Robert Frost

Diplomacy is the art of saying "Nice Doggie!" till you can find a rock.

-Wynn Catlin

What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight - it's the size of the fight in the dog.

-Dwight D. Eisenhower

Rentable Area, Usable Area & Loss Factor

Rentable area is the square footage for which rent is actually being paid. Often, other charges within the lease are based upon this figure (e.g., rental escalation).

Usable area is the space actually occupied, as measured in square feet. This does not include public corridors, stairwells, bathrooms, and other similar areas.

Loss factor is the difference between the rentable and usable area, and is expressed as a percentage of the former. For example, if the total rentable area is 10,000 square feet and the usable area 8,000 square feet, the loss factor is 20 percent (2,000 divided by 10,000).

Some leases may contain a base or stop provision. This provision requires the tenant to pay escalation on all the owner's costs above the stop amount.

Example: The minimum rent is \$20 per square foot, with a base or stop provision of \$5 per square foot. If the tenant's share of the owner's increased expenses is \$3 per square foot in the second year of the lease, the tenant pays no escalation. If it rises to \$7 in the third year, the tenant would pay only \$2 a square foot, not the full \$7 increase.



Subletting is a major issue between tenant and building owner. The owner may have concerns about subletting because of the loss of control in the selection of any new or additional tenant. If the office space market is soft, building owners may be more willing to allow subletting.

Many leasing agreements contain a casualty renovation clause. In the event of fire or flooding, the lease may give the owner three months or more to renovate. That time period may be negotiable. Some tenants may try to negotiate an agreement to stop paying rent when the damage occurs and until the damage is repaired. This is called a rent abatement clause. If you do not wish to allow an abatement clause, an alternative for the tenant is to purchase rent insurance, which pays the rent when and if the premises are unfit for occupancy.



Robert Morris University Buildings Receive Facelift

Project Profile

The student body of Robert Morris University, Moon Township campus, was surprised to find a “facelift” in progress on several of their on-campus residences when they returned to school last fall. New vertical, sheet metal mansard roofs and horizontal, sheet metal wall panels were added to three of the freshman

dormitory buildings. In addition, seven flat roofs were also replaced with new modified roof systems. The attractive mansard roofs and matching sheet metal wall panels complement the residences giving them an updated, modern look.

The project began in May, 2008, and was completed in October, 2008. Overall, the project covered nearly 55,000

square feet of roofing system and sheet metal roofing and wall panels.

Specifications

Franklin Center

- 4,800sf Hickman modified roof system

Gallatin, Hamilton and Hancock Halls

- 5,500sf each Hickman modified roof system

Adams Hall

- 5,500sf Hickman modified roof system
- 2,800sf 24ga Berridge Cee-lock Galvalume mansard roof panels
- 3,000sf Berridge HR16 24ga Kynar corrugated wall panels
- 440sf 12" flush panel 24ga Galvalume Kynar parapet wall panels and soffit

- 400sf 12" flush panel 24ga Kynar parapet wall panels and soffit

Madison & Monroe Halls

- 5,500sf each Hickman modified roof system
- 2,180sf each 24ga Berridge Cee-lock Galvalume mansard roof panels
- 3,000sf each Berridge HR16 24ga Kynar corrugated wall panels
- 525sf each 12" flush panel 24ga Galvalume Kynar parapet wall panels and soffit
- 450sf each 12" flush panel 24ga Kynar parapet wall panels and soffit

The University is so pleased with the results of the project transformation that they are continuing the “facelifts” with three additional dormitories in 2009.



Robert Morris University on-campus residences.

Left: Before construction



Right: After roof additions and mansard roof panels

For more information about our company or to request literature, please contact one of the regional offices listed below or visit our website at: www.burns-scalo.com

Burns & Scalo Roofing Co., Inc. (Hdqtrs)
 22 Rutgers Road, Suite 200
 Pittsburgh, PA 15205-2550
 Toll Free: 800/622-4336
 FAX: 412/928-8705
 Contact: Mark Heckathorne
 Email: HeckathorneM@burns-scalo.com

Burns & Scalo Ohio, Inc.
 P.O. Box 660
 Marion, OH 43301
 Toll Free: 800/622-4336
 FAX: 614/455-0885
 Contact: John Lee
 Email: LeeJ@burns-scalo.com

Burns & Scalo North Carolina, Inc.
 White Oak Business Park, 151 Sigma Drive
 Garner, NC 27529
 Toll Free: 800/622-4336
 FAX: 919/662-1625
 Contact: Chad Crawford
 Email: CrawfordC@burns-scalo.com

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Burns & Scalo Roofing Company, Inc.
 22 Rutgers Road, Suite 200
 Pittsburgh, PA 15205-2550