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1. Snow danger above - US East & North East in particular

Tony Forester of Global Asset Protection Services LLC, the Club's main provider of risk assessment surveys, has provided the following alert in relation to forecast heavy snow accumulations from northern Virginia through southern New England.

"A couple of our customers in the eastern US have recently suffered roof collapses due to heavy snow. Snow accumulations of 12 to 18 inches are predicted from northern Virginia through southern New England.

Facilities in the path of this new storm should be advised to do what they can safely to remove existing snow from flat roofs, and areas where roof elevations change. Roof drains should also be kept clear of ice and snow, and care should be taken so as not to damage roof coverings when removing snow from the roof.

After the storm has passed, snow should be cleared from all sprinkler system control valves, curb-box valves, fire pumps, and yard hydrants, to assure that they are accessible in an emergency.

In the event of a roof collapse, impairment handling procedures should be implemented, and extreme care should be taken to assure that no hot work is performed in affected areas where sprinkler protection is not in service. Fire department response times will be longer, and their ability to control a fire will be greatly reduced in extreme weather conditions, making it even more critical that protection be maintained in operable condition, and likely causes of loss are eliminated.

As is often the case during snow emergencies, everyone is concerned about the snow accumulation on the ground, while the biggest potential for loss may be looming just over their heads.

The following list of items to consider for roof snow loading/removal is not exhaustive, but provides some quick guidelines:

(a) Personnel safety is critical when inspecting a roof for snow build up. Site safety program for proximity to building/roof edge must be adhered to at all times. No one should go on the roof alone.

(b) 'Sticking' the depth of the snow on the roof is a common method. A predetermined amount should be used to trigger removal. This should be based on design of roof. If unknown, 6–8 inch accumulation is a common amount in southern states that are not used to having much snow. Northern states typically have roofs designed to handle an increased loading.

(c) Site personnel need to be aware that heat loss from the building through the roof will form ice that is MUCH heavier. Therefore, 'sticking' the depth alone is not good enough. Particular worries for ice build up are located over heat treat, ovens, boilers, penetrations through the roof for stacks, vents, etc. Ice should be carefully removed. Chemically melting the ice should be reviewed by site environmental personnel.

(d) Removing of snow must be cautious. Hand shovels (plastic preferred) should be careful not to damage/penetrate the roof exterior nor remove loose stone from the roof ballast.

(e) Snow removed and thrown to the ground needs to be with caution for where it lands and potential ice chunks hitting windows, cars, transformers, etc.

(f) If necessary, snow blowers/brooms can be used on the roof but at no time should gasoline be stored on the roof. All equipment should be removed from roof after use including shovels, tarps, etc.

(g) Differing roof heights with a sloping collection of snow should be cleared even if the rest of the roof is free of accumulation.

(h) When removing the snow, do not create piles on the roof as this concentrates weight. Evenly remove as much as possible.

(i) Personnel should be able to recognize a deflecting roof. Symptoms include:

Lights hanging lower than normal and often get hit by inside permanent mounted cranes

Lights flicker on/off due to wires being stretched

Water infiltration at the roof where it connects to walls

Creaking noises

Peeling/falling paint from underside of deck that is new

Other utilities have minor interruptions – copper water lines break/leak inside that are attached at roof

Broken bolts/screws that normally hold the roof together found on the floor

Roof drains that become raised above the deck”

2. Conclusion

We hope that you will have found the above item interesting. If you would like to have further information about any of them, or have any comments you would like to make, please email the editor at tt.talk@ttclub.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

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for the TT Club

TT Talk is a free electronic newsletter published as occasion demands, by the TT Club, 90 Fenchurch Street, London, EC3M 4ST, United Kingdom.

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