

# Construction Safety Advisory

## NIGHT ROOFING

“Night roofing,” or roofing work performed after dark, is increasingly popular with building owners and consultants who want to avoid asphalt smells, noise, and disruptions to building operations during regular business hours. There are obvious hazards connected with night roofing, however, and some that are not so obvious. These risks apply equally to building owners and roofing contractors.

### *Accidents and Injuries*

Roofing entails working at heights with molten asphalt and open flames, handling heavy materials, operating power equipment, and other high-risk activities. Workers are potentially exposed to burns, cuts, fractures, and falls. These hazards are compounded by working at night when no amount of lighting can replicate daylight conditions. Shadows, glare, blinding light, and miles of cable increase the risk of personal injury and property damage. The impact of odd working hours and unfamiliar conditions on personnel must also be considered.

### *Fire Hazards*

Some roofing systems require the use of propane torches that may ignite building material. Fires can smoulder for several hours before breaking into open flame. During daylight operations a roofing contractor typically provides a smoke or fire watch for one or two hours after torching work. This isn't possible in the dark where smoke from smouldering material can be difficult to see.

### *Quality of Work*

In addition to safety hazards, working in the dark can lead to poor workmanship and take longer to complete because of reduced production schedules. Both factors add considerably to costs. Some roofing system warranties may not apply to work completed at night. Condensation is another factor to consider. Whether it appears as moisture or frost, condensation present during roofing installation can cause serious problems later. The same is true of rain. Changing weather patterns difficult to detect at night can bring rain during installation, compromising the future effectiveness of roofing systems. Water damage to building interiors from unexpected rain can also be significant when old roofs have been stripped off prior to re-roofing.

### *Summary*

The combination of safety hazards, poor quality control, and increased liability for both building owners and roofing contractors makes night roofing *unacceptable*. Owners and their consultants should not consider night roofing a viable option to avoid inconvenience or disruption during regular business hours. The losses in safety and workmanship far outweigh any advantages to be gained from night roofing.

**Ontario Roofing Trade Labour-Management Health and Safety Committee**

**Construction Safety Association of Ontario**

**Ontario Industrial Roofing Contractors Association**