

Estates and Facilities Notice

Reference: EFN2401

Issued: 16 September 2024

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Update on RAAC plank risk: specific risks caused by rooflights - immediate action

Summary

A RAAC roof collapse, in a non-public sector building, this summer has highlighted that rooflights present a particular risk of RAAC failure and that the failure can extend beyond the immediate panel. While there is no current change in National IStructE Guidance, it is therefore advised that all unmitigated rooflight details are considered a 'critical high risk' and addressed accordingly.

Action

1. Direct this notice to all appropriate managers, staff and users
2. All rooflight details that have not had structural support measures installed, should be assessed urgently and might require urgent remedial works which may include taking out of use or temporary propping to allow the safe ongoing use of a building. Depending on the extent, this may be part or all of the building.
3. Remediation solutions for rooflights should include additional support to adjacent planks that are an intrinsic part of the construction detail.
4. Those managing RAAC roofs should be reminded of the double impact of saturated planks as a result of water leaks (significant reduction in material strength and significant increase of material weight) and the loading effects of water pooling. Further details will be available in a CROSS report, at present there is no update to the IStructE guidance.

Background Information

In August 2024, a failure of RAAC long-span roof panels around roof lights in a flat roof, within a building in the private sector, resulted in the collapse of 12 panels into the space below. The area had been vacated as a precaution, as the structural engineer, employing the IStructE risk classification system, had previously identified the planks as critical high risk. There were no injuries.

In this instance, as well as there being cut panels and proprietary trimmers associated with the rooflights, ongoing leaks resulted in saturated planks and particularly heavy rainfall added to the presence of ponding on the roof. These factors combined to be the likely cause of the collapse.

Conclusions

Although the heightened risk of shear failure with cut planks, with the subsequent loss of transverse rebar, is well documented, the additional loading on adjacent panels when supporting rooflights is not explicitly captured within the current guidance. This collapse has shown that a known weakness that resulted in failure of one plank expanded into adjacent panels in the area, which in turn collapsed.

The inherent weakness of cut planks was exacerbated by plank saturation and significant additional loading from extensive ponding.



For clarity, this is typical of the rooflight detail being addressed:

Suggested onward distribution (may not include all affected departments)

NHS and healthcare

- General Dental Practitioners
- General Medical Practitioners
- Health Centres
- Hospices
- Health & Safety
- Risk Management
- Safety Representatives
- Capital Planning & Design
- PFI / PPP staff

Local Authority & Social Care

- Facilities Management
- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Home Care services
- Property Services

Enquiries

This notice has been compiled under a partnership arrangement by the organisations below and it has been distributed across the UK. Enquiries should be directed to the appropriate Regional Office quoting the reference number **EFN2401**.

Accessibility: Please contact us using the details below if you are blind or have a sight impairment and would like to request this notice in a more suitable format.

England:

Enquires should be emailed to england.estates.opscentre@nhs.net. Defects or failures should be reported on this system: <https://efm.digital.nhs.uk/>

The web-based D&F reporting system is managed by NHS Digital on behalf of NHS Improvement. For further information on this system, including obtaining login details, please contact the efm-information Helpdesk. Tel 0300 123 2106.

Northern Ireland:

Enquiries and adverse incident reports in Northern Ireland should be addressed to:

Northern Ireland Adverse Incident Centre, Health Estates Directorate, Department of Health
Tel: 028 9052 3868, Email: niaic@health-ni.gov.uk, Web: <http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/niaic>

Please report adverse events in Northern Ireland to NIAIC here: [how to report an adverse incident](#)

Scotland

Incident Reporting & Investigation Centre (IRIC), Facilities Division, NHSScotland Assure
NHS National Services Scotland, Tel: 0131 275 7575, email: nss.irc@nhs.scot

To find safety alerts:
scan the QR code or [click this link to visit our website](#)



To report an incident:
scan the QR code or [click this link to visit our website](#)



Wales

Enquiries and adverse incident reports in Wales should be addressed to:

NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership – Specialist Estates Services
4th Floor, Companies House, Crown Way, Cardiff CF14 3UB
Tel: 029 2090 4118 or E-mail: efa.ses@wales.nhs.uk