

Post-Storm Roof Survey and Controlled Reentry JHA

Worked instructional example

Work and worksite

After a severe storm, a roofing lead will coordinate a bounded damage survey of one building before any emergency roof repair begins. Initial observations come from protected locations outside the closed area; limited inspection access requires actual structural, utility and access acceptances. This fictional learning example describes planned controls and records no inspection findings or authorization to reenter.

- The building and affected roof remain closed until the assigned responsible parties resolve structural stability, utilities, falling-object and access hazards. A calm sky or expired warning is not evidence that the roof, anchors or entrance are usable.
- The employer determines applicable inspection and construction rules. This scenario requires protected inspection access, communication and withdrawal arrangements; an inspection-only regulatory exception does not provide structural or utility clearance.
- Emergency roof repair 238160-36 is a partial connection covering pre-repair survey and limited reentry only. Active-storm response, rescue, debris removal, temporary tarping, repair, demolition, structural shoring and utility restoration require separate plans.

Questions before work

- Who controls closure and obtains the required structural, utility and inspection-access decisions for this building?
- Which protected observation method can establish the initial hazards without entering the damaged roof or fall zone?
- How are the permitted survey area, withdrawal triggers and unresolved hazards communicated before any later repair is planned?

Task Hazard Control

1 Maintain closure and define the survey authority

Hazard: Production pressure or an informal all-clear can send workers into a building with unknown structural damage, live utilities or unstable roof components.

Control: Site lead maintains affected building, roof and falling-object closures and identifies access control. Define the survey and assign structural, utility and access responsibilities. Review available incident, building and weather information. Roofing personnel report observations; they do not independently authorize stabilization or utility restoration.

Verification: Site lead verifies closure, assigned authorities and the bounded inspection purpose.

Reasoning: Clear authority prevents a damage survey from becoming uncontrolled reentry.

2 Observe from protected locations without entering damage

Hazard: Falling roof material, weakened walls, electrical lines or contaminated standing water can expose an observer approaching for a closer look.

Control: Use already accepted observation positions outside collapse, electrical and falling-object hazards. Review drawings and non-entry observations for displacement, sagging, openings, ponding and access damage. Exclude occupants and other trades. Do not climb, reach through debris or cross suspect water for a better view; refer inaccessible conditions.

Verification: Inspection lead records observation locations, visible hazards and remaining unknowns.

Reasoning: Initial information gathering must not depend on entering the hazard.

3 Obtain the structural and utility decisions

Hazard: Hidden damage, reenergized conductors or suspect fuel and electrical equipment can remain dangerous despite an apparently intact roof surface.

Control: Refer stability and load-path questions to the assigned competent assessor, with engineering evaluation where needed. Obtain utility or authorized technical decisions on affected systems. Avoid conductors and leaks and retain unresolved closures. Stabilization, isolation or testing needed for acceptance is separately planned by responsible personnel.

Verification: Site lead verifies actual structural and utility findings and retained restrictions.

Reasoning: Visible surface condition cannot establish hidden support or utility safety.

Complete the work and hand over

4 Accept only a limited protected inspection route

Hazard: Damaged ladders, anchors, deck or opening covers can fail during access, and an overly broad release can send workers beyond assessed support.

Control: After structural and utility decisions, access lead evaluates approach, bearing, work positions, edges, openings and selected anchors/equipment. Establish accepted protection and emergency/withdrawal arrangements before entry. Controller specifies who enters, where and for what survey. Keep unassessed areas closed; never expand a release informally.

Verification: Access controller verifies the limited route, controls and entry responsibilities.

Reasoning: An accepted route does not release every part of a damaged roof.

5 Survey within limits and withdraw for changed conditions

Hazard: Loose material, new movement, weather deterioration or a discovery beyond the assessed route can undermine the basis for inspection access.

Control: Follow the accepted route with communication maintained and document damage from protected positions. Do not remove debris, open roofing, plug drains or begin repairs. Report new sagging, sounds, utility concerns or lost protection and withdraw safely. Controller restores affected closure and obtains reassessment before return.

Verification: Inspection lead checks permitted coverage, communication and change-response decisions.

Reasoning: The release remains valid only while its accepted conditions persist.

6 Transfer bounded findings and keep repair work held

Hazard: A survey report or urgent leak request can be misread as permission to begin work on an incompletely assessed or protected roof.

Control: Exit through accepted access; controller checks personnel accountability and closure state. Record inspected/uninspected areas, actual observations, acceptances and restrictions. Transfer remaining structural, utility, access and material questions to repair planning. Each repair crew needs a separate task plan and release; the survey authorizes no repair.

Verification: Site lead verifies personnel out, closure state and the repair-planning handoff.

Reasoning: Damage information supports the next decision without replacing its controls.

Pause and reassess

- Structural or utility acceptance is absent, disputed or superseded by newly observed damage.
- Weather, standing water, falling material, movement or access/protection conditions change from the accepted limited route.
- Communication, accountability or withdrawal access is lost, or the requested work extends into debris removal, repair or stabilization.

Improve the controls

Needs improvement: The storm has passed, so the roof is safe to enter.

More useful: Access controller maintains closure until the assigned structural, utility and access leads provide the actual decisions for a defined route.

Needs improvement: We found the leak; patch it while we are here.

More useful: Inspection crew records the finding and leaves repair held for a separate task plan, protection arrangement and work release.

Decisions that change the analysis

What if the inside of the building must be assessed before roof support can be accepted?

Do not send the roofing crew inside as an improvised inspection step. The structural assessment lead must select a separately accepted method for obtaining that information, including protected access or non-entry techniques appropriate to the damage. Keep the affected area closed until the actual stability and utility questions are resolved. The need for evidence does not itself authorize entry to obtain it.

What must the crew record for actual use?

Record building and event information, closure controller, protected observation positions, structural and utility assessment responsibilities and actual findings. Identify the precisely released inspection route, protection, communication and withdrawal arrangements, inspected and uninspected areas, damage records and changed-condition decisions. Transfer restrictions, accountability and unresolved repair-planning needs; this example supplies no reentry clearance or emergency repair approval.

Training needs

- Instruction on the employer's post-storm closure and release process, including remote observation, structural and utility referral limits, changing conditions and controlled withdrawal.
- Task instruction on the accepted limited inspection-access method, fall and opening protection, communication and reporting of uncertainty without treating a survey as authorization for repair.

Confirm applicable qualifications and actual training evidence for the people assigned. Related toolbox talks support discussion; they do not establish competence.

References and adaptation

OSHA Hurricane eMatrix: Roof Inspection, Tarping and Repair
<https://www.osha.gov/etools/hurricane/activity-sheets/building/roof-inspection>

OSHA Hurricane eMatrix: Assessment, Cleanup and Repair of Structures
<https://www.osha.gov/etools/hurricane/activity-sheets/building/clean-up-repair>

OSHA interpretation: Roofing inspections and assessments, March 12, 2004
<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/2004-03-12>

OSHA 1926.501 Walking/working surface and fall-protection duties
<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.501>

References reviewed October 12, 2026. Use actual equipment and product instructions, project design and site requirements. This original draft supplies no fabricated inspection, signature or approval.