



National  
Operational  
Guidance

## Control measure

**Protect work at height equipment in  
use**



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC

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### Control measure knowledge

Soft-textile type height safety equipment, including ropes and lanyards, is the most susceptible to damage from unprotected edges in the work at height environment.

Sharp or abrasive edges should be controlled using the following hierarchical approach:

- Remove (the hazard, where feasible)
- Avoid (the hazard)
- Protect (against the hazard)

After hazard removal, the best form of protection for textile equipment is to avoid contact completely. This can normally be achieved by using anchors and rigging configurations that completely avoid, or deviate from, edges or by using other equipment that holds the ropes away from the abrasive or sharp edge. Consideration must be given to the potential consequences of failure and shifts of positions. The access/rescue path of textile equipment must be fully assessed for potential hazards.

The following are examples of hazards that should be taken into account when protecting textile-type safety equipment:

- Sharp edges such as those found on steel work, cable trays, gratings, glass façades or composite panels
- Abrasive edges and surfaces such as coping stones, rock protrusions and corroded structures
- Trapping and cutting areas such as manhole covers, hatches or doorways
- Heat sources and the risk of melting from hot pipes, exhaust gases, lighting, etc.
- Corrosive substances such as chemical deposits or spillages
- Mechanical equipment, such as tools

Aside from personnel trying to avoid working where edges could compromise operational safety, the key control measure is to use supplementary equipment to protect the ropes when in contact with the edges in question: for example, rope-protecting edge rollers, tripods and cantilever frames.



## Strategic actions

## Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Use equipment and procedures to protect rope and other work at height equipment from damage when in use