

## Walking on Unicrete Concrete Roof Tiles

Any roof material can be damaged by foot traffic, and no roof should be walked on without good reason. Unicrete Concrete Roof Tiles are quite walkable, as long as you don't walk above vents, or close to hips or valleys; where there are smaller cut pieces that can snap. It is best to walk on the bottoms of the tiles, as this transfers your weight directly onto the 1"x4" batten under the tile that supports each tile. New roof tiles are more fragile than those that have had a year or more to cure. There are always some roof tiles broken during new installations, and they are generally left until the roof is finished and then replaced as the last step in completing the roof. A good organized tiling crew will minimize the travel onto finished portions of the roof to reduce breakage during installation. Roof tiles in new construction are often left off in a pile on the roof, when there will be masonry workers, stucco workers, or other trades doing extensive work on top of them, which may cause breakage and/or stain the tile with mortar, stucco or paint. The older the tiles, the stronger they will be; as the concrete continues to increase in strength for years. Older tiles are much better to work on than either cedar (which will usually crack under foot when spending much time working on it); asphalt (which will usually have the graduals worn off and black felt layers exposed, causing a slip hazard as well as damage - especially if working on asphalt when it is hot out and/or on south exposures with windows); or metal (which is very slippery and can easily dent). Do not walk on wet tiles as they are both more easily broken and the chance of slipping is greatly increased. If you are working on any roof steeper than a 5/12 slope, it is very dangerous if you do not use a proper scaffolding system, as the steeper the slope, the easier it is to fall. On any roof, proper fall restraint/arrest and safety precautions should be observed, and you should wear a safety harness.

Concrete tiles have one huge natural advantage if doing extensive painting or other renovation work from the roof deck. They may be easily removed and stacked to one side and a natural ladder system is already in place, created by the under tile 1"x4" batten system. This gives a nice working surface and allows paint drips to fall harmlessly on the underlay where they will be hidden when the tiles are placed back on the tile battens when finished. A special temporary anchoring system using the 1"x4"s is also available. If you do break a tile they are very easily replaced. First, lift up the tile beside it to the left a couple of inches and place a support under the front edge (use your hammer handle etc.) The pressure from the rain seal lock is then released from the broken tile. The tile to the right and up one row is then lifted and blocked in a similar manner. The rain seal from this (top right) tile will remove the top overlap pressure from the top of the broken tile when it lifts the tile above the broken tile. Then simply slide the broken tile pieces up to disengage the tile lug, which is locked at the top of the 1"x4" batten, lift up the tile and slide it out past the 1"x4" allowing the lug to clear the 1"x4", and slide the pieces out. The new tile is then simply slid up into the empty space until the lug on the back of the tile falls down and behind the 1"x4" batten, pulled down snug to the 1"x4", and locked in place. Nailing is generally not required. Replacement tiles usually sell for around \$1.50 each, and this replacement process takes less than a minute.

Brent Applegate (Technical Manager) 2004