



Walking on Terra Cotta Tiles

TECHNICAL SUPPORT DOCUMENT




LUDOWICI®

Walking on Terra Cotta Roof Tiles

PROPER FOOT TRAFFIC ON CLAY ROOF TILES

It is critical that contractors, maintenance personnel, or building owners who must access or walk on terra cotta tile roofs understand the recommended methods for doing so. While terra cotta roof tiles are extremely durable and long lasting, improper foot placement can increase the likelihood of tile breakage. The guidance and illustrations below demonstrate the recommended way to walk on terra cotta roof tiles to help minimize damage during roof access.

FOOT PLACEMENT

To minimize the chance of breaking tiles while walking on the roof, it is important to place your feet on the headlap area of the tile. The headlap is where overlapping sections of tile create multiple layers of clay that are fully supported by the roof deck beneath. Because this area has increased structural support, walking on the headlaps provides the best opportunity to reduce stress on individual tiles and minimize the potential for breakage.

Walking near the center or unsupported portions of the tile — where there may only be a single layer of clay spanning over the tile cant or void area — can significantly increase the likelihood of cracking or breaking the tile under foot traffic.



UTILIZING FOAM BOARDS:

Another effective method when working on or walking across an installed clay tile roof is to use semi-rigid foam boards with adhered plywood. This type of board provides several benefits. First, it helps reduce the risk of tile breakage by distributing weight across a larger surface area rather than concentrating it on a single tile. Second, the foam substrate acts as a “gripper,” helping to minimize slipping. Third, the foam cushioning absorbs and softens some of the load impact on the tiles.

See the image to the right for an example of an installer using one of these boards. The board shown was created by adhering 1/2” plywood to a 3” thick multi-purpose foam using construction adhesive. It measures approximately 24” x 72” and creates a stable, temporary work surface on the installed clay tiles.

