

Technical Bulletin

WALKING ON TILE

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While walking on any roof surface should be kept to a minimum, occasionally it may be necessary. Caution should be exercised since most manufacturers specifically do not warrant breakage due to foot traffic. If tiles are broken, they should be replaced as soon as possible to avoid damage to the underlayment from water intrusion or exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun.

To avoid breaking tiles, there are certain methods of traversing that may minimize damage. Typically, it is recommended to step at the bottom three inches of the installed tile. This is the portion of the tile that is supported by the lapped tile beneath it and the weight is transferred through it to the deck below. Orient your feet in a direction parallel with the ridge and try to distribute your weight evenly and walk as softly as possible. On España or Mission 'S' tiles, it is recommended to distribute your weight with the heel and toe on the high points of adjacent tiles.

Another option that proves helpful, particularly when work tasks may distract, is to use walk pads to distribute weight over a larger area. Pads may be fabricated in a number of ways but are typically made from sheets of plywood cut into 2'x2' sections. The underside of these pads can then be fitted with softer material such as carpet or rigid foam that will help spread the weight and prevent slippage.

It is also recommended to stay away from hips or valleys to avoid breaking cut tiles that would be more difficult to replace. The exception to this would be in situations where the hips and ridges are bedded in mortar or foam in which case, they may be preferred walking paths. Valleys can also be ideal access paths if the tiles are cut away from the center of the valley wide enough to allow foot traffic on the valley flashing instead of the tile.

