

## BACKGROUND

The Australian Roofing Tile Association (ARTA) is the peak body representing the concerns and interests of more than 90% of the roofing tile industry in Australia. Safety is a prioritised concern for our members.

ARTA is collaboratively working with roofing tile manufacturers and Work Health and Safety (WHS) officials to ensure that the roofing tile industry leads the way when it comes to protecting workers from the hazards of handling cut or broken terracotta tiles in roofing construction.

## THE HAZARD

According to Safe Work Australia, cuts and open wounds make up 31% of injuries in the construction industry. Therefore, it is important that hazards with exposed sharp, jagged edges are identified and accounted for.



Glazed terracotta roof tiles are a common material choice used in roofing construction, often chosen for its durability, energy efficiency, and ease of installation. However, glazed terracotta tiles can become a safety hazard in the workplace for roof tilers when they are cut or broken during roofing installation. Incorrectly handling cut or broken terracotta roof tiles can be dangerous as the cut edges are sharp and can cause severe lacerations to tendons and ligaments.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS

Glazed terracotta roof tiles that are cut, broken, or cracked should be handled with additional caution. When a glazed terracotta roof tile breaks or is cut in the installation process, take your time to assess the situation from a safety perspective to prevent potential injuries arising from the exposed sharp edges.



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF GLAZED TERRACOTTA TILES:

- ✓ Always think and look for the line of fire when handling cut or broken tiles.
  - ✓ Work on safety habits to prevent the onset of complacency.
  - ✓ Use appropriate PPE such as high cut resistant safety gloves when handling glazed terracotta tiles, and use additional high cut resistant lower arm protectors when handling cut or broken glazed terracotta tiles for greater cut protection and gripping ability.
  - ✓ When setting up to cut tiles, always position yourself further up the roofline away from the bottom row (typically the 4th row up) to allow space for tile placement without having to pass the tiles over yourself or others.
  - ✓ Ensure any broken, cut, or excess tiles are stored/placed correctly and in a stable location – make sure it is not a falling hazard.
  - ✓ Safely dispose broken and excess roof tiles into the site-designated waste pile/bin.
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- ✗ Do not pass a broken or cut tile over any part of the body.
  - ✗ Do not place cut or broken terracotta tiles directly onto elevated surfaces where they could fall. Always place them into a bin or bucket for safe removal from the roof top.