



Specialty Cleaning

Licensed High-Access Cleaning Crew Guide

What facility managers and property owners need to know about high-access cleaning, fall protection, and working-at-heights requirements in Ontario.

OHSA Part 207 Certified Bay & Sudbury

Working at Heights regulations

mandatory for all workers

Binx service area

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SECTION 01

What Is High-Access Cleaning?



High-access cleaning addresses surfaces that cannot be reached safely from ground level.

High-access cleaning encompasses any cleaning task that requires working above ground level — typically defined in Ontario's OHSAs as work at or above 3 metres (approximately 10 feet). This includes interior tasks (high ceilings, skylights, light fixtures) and exterior work (facades, high windows, rooflines, and signage).

Common High-Access Cleaning Tasks

- High window cleaning: Windows above the reach of standard extension poles — typically second storey and above.
- Interior ceiling and fixture cleaning: High-bay warehouse fixtures, atrium skylights, gymnasium ceilings, church vaulted ceilings.
- Exterior building facade: Siding, cladding, signage, and decorative elements on multi-storey buildings.
- Gutter cleaning above single-storey height: Gutters on commercial and multi-storey residential buildings.
- Rooftop equipment cleaning: HVAC units, solar panel arrays, rooftop mechanical equipment.
- Parking structure cleaning: Overhead surfaces, light fixtures, and structural elements in multi-level parkades.

SECTION 02

Ontario Working at Heights Regulations



Ontario's Working at Heights regulations are among the most comprehensive in North America.

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), Regulation 213 (Construction Projects) and O. Reg. 851 (Industrial Establishments) govern working at heights in most cleaning contexts. In 2015, Ontario introduced mandatory Working at Heights training through the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Key Regulatory Requirements

- **MOL Working at Heights certification:** All workers who work at heights of 3 metres or more must hold a valid Working at Heights certificate from an MOL-approved training provider. This is a mandatory prerequisite — not optional.
- **Guardrails and barriers:** Where practicable, fall prevention through physical barriers is preferred over fall arrest systems (harnesses). Guardrails must meet OHSA specifications.
- **Fall arrest systems:** Where guardrails are not practicable, a fall arrest system (full-body harness, lanyard, and anchor point rated to OHSA standards) must be used.
- **Employer responsibility:** The employer — including cleaning contractors — is responsible for ensuring all workers are trained, equipped, and supervised when working at heights.

Recertification

MOL Working at Heights certification is valid for 3 years. After 3 years, a refresher course is required to maintain certification. Facility managers should ask for copies of current certification before allowing any contractor to perform high-access work on their property.

SECTION 03

Fall Protection Systems



Fall protection systems must be selected to match the task, structure, and regulatory requirement.

Fall protection for cleaning work is a hierarchy: eliminate the fall risk first, then prevent it, then arrest it. Selecting the right system for each task requires understanding the structure, the task duration, and the applicable OSHA regulation.

Fall Protection Hierarchy

1

Elimination

Design the task to be performed from ground level using extension tools — eliminate the need to work at height.

2

Passive Prevention

Install guardrails, barriers, or work platforms that prevent any worker from reaching the fall edge.

3

Fall Restraint

Use a restraint system (harness + lanyard) that prevents a worker from reaching the fall edge — not designed to arrest a fall already in progress.

4

Fall Arrest

Where fall restraint is not practicable, use a full fall arrest system (full-body harness, shock-absorbing lanyard, certified anchor point rated to minimum 22kN).

5**Administrative Controls**

Establish exclusion zones below work areas, implement permit-to-work systems, and ensure all workers are briefed on emergency rescue procedures.

SECTION 04

Aerial Work Platforms & Lift Equipment



Scissor lifts and boom lifts provide the safest working platform for most high-access cleaning tasks.

Aerial work platforms (AWPs) — scissor lifts, boom lifts, and personnel lifts — are the preferred method for high-access cleaning when floor conditions allow their use. They provide a stable, guarded platform that reduces fall risk compared to ladders or scaffolding.

AWP Types for Cleaning Applications

Best For

Flat, level surfaces — warehouse ceilings, retail

Irregular reach, multi-storey exterior work

Light interior work — retail, small commercial

Exterior facades, arenas, large industrial

Operator Certification

Ontario's OHS Act requires that operators of aerial work platforms be trained and competent. 'Competent' is defined as adequately qualified, suitably trained, and with sufficient experience — verbal training does not meet this standard. Operators should hold a recognized AWP operator certification.

SECTION 05

Ladders — Safe Use and Limitations



Ladders are not the preferred method for high-access cleaning — they are a last resort with strict limitations.

Ladders are the most commonly misused piece of equipment in cleaning operations. Ontario OHSA treats ladder use at heights as a fall hazard requiring specific controls. Ladders are not a general-purpose platform — they are a limited-use tool for specific, short-duration tasks.

Ladder Safety Rules for Cleaning Operations

- ▣ Use the right ladder for the task — duty rating must exceed total load (worker + tools + equipment)
- ▣ Extension ladder: set at 4:1 ratio — 1 foot out for every 4 feet of height
- ▣ Extension ladder: extend minimum 1 metre above landing or top access point
- ▣ Step ladder: never stand on top step or top cap
- ▣ Both feet on ladder rungs at all times — do not overreach
- ▣ Secure ladder top and bottom where practicable — have a spotter for unsecured ladders
- ▣ Never use a ladder on an unstable surface (ice, gravel, uneven floor)
- ▣ Inspect every ladder before use — remove from service if damaged

SECTION 06

Rope Access Cleaning



Rope access cleaning is used for high-rise facades and structures where equipment cannot access.

Rope access — also called industrial rope access or IRAT — allows trained workers to descend building facades, suspended from certified anchor points, without mechanical platforms. It is used where aerial lifts cannot reach and scaffolding is cost-prohibitive.

When Rope Access Is Required

- High-rise window cleaning: Buildings above 4–5 storeys where swing stage or aerial lift cannot reach all facades.
- Complex geometries: Buildings with setbacks, canopies, or architectural features that prevent platform access.
- Limited ground access: Sites where lift equipment cannot be positioned due to adjacent structures, utilities, or terrain.
- Atrium and skylight cleaning: Interior structures where accessing the exterior of skylights requires suspension from the roof structure.

IRATA Certification

Rope access workers in Ontario follow IRATA (Industrial Rope Access Trade Association) standards, with three levels of certification (Technician, Supervisor, Team Leader). Always confirm IRATA certification level before authorizing rope access work on your facility.

SECTION 07

Interior High-Access Cleaning



Interior high-access cleaning addresses light fixtures, ceilings, structural beams, and HVAC components.

High-access cleaning inside commercial and industrial buildings includes light fixtures, ductwork surfaces, structural beams, overhead sprinkler systems, and high-bay storage racking. These surfaces accumulate significant dust and debris that can contaminate products, create fire hazards, and reduce light output.

Interior High-Access Scope

- ▣ High-bay light fixtures — lenses, reflectors, housings
- ▣ Ceiling mounted fans and HVAC diffusers
- ▣ Structural steel beams and purlins
- ▣ Overhead sprinkler heads and piping (dry dusting only — no liquid)
- ▣ High-mounted security cameras
- ▣ Skylights — interior glass
- ▣ Overhead door tracks and hardware
- ▣ High-mount signage

Fire Code Implication

Dust accumulation on structural beams and overhead surfaces in manufacturing and warehouse facilities can be a fire hazard under Ontario's Fire Code. Regular high-access cleaning is a maintenance obligation — not just a housekeeping preference.

SECTION 08

Exterior High-Access Cleaning



Exterior high-access cleaning includes facades, windows, signage, and roofline elements.

Exterior high-access cleaning improves curb appeal, prevents accelerated material deterioration, and maintains building envelope integrity. Northern Ontario's climate creates specific exterior cleaning challenges — salt, freeze-thaw staining, biological growth, and bird fouling.

Exterior High-Access Cleaning Scope

- Upper-floor and high-rise window cleaning
- Building facade — siding, cladding, curtain wall
- Roofline gutters and downspouts above safe ladder height
- Exterior signage and awnings
- Building entrance canopies
- Exterior light fixtures at height
- Bird fouling remediation — ledges, parapet walls, signage
- Skylights — exterior glass

SECTION 09

Training and Certification Requirements



Working at heights training is mandatory in Ontario — verify credentials before authorizing any high-access work.

Ontario has some of the most prescriptive working at heights training requirements in North America. Facility managers who allow contractors to perform high-access work on their property should verify that all workers hold current, valid certifications.

Required Certifications

Validity

3 years

As specified

3 years

Annual

Request Copies

Always request copies of all Working at Heights certificates before a contractor begins high-access work on your property. A contractor who cannot produce current certificates should not be authorized to begin work. Your liability exposure as property owner is real if an uncertified worker is injured.

SECTION 10

Hiring a Compliant High-Access Crew



Verifying compliance before authorizing high-access work protects your property and limits liability.

Hiring a compliant high-access cleaning crew requires more due diligence than standard commercial cleaning. The safety stakes are higher, the regulatory requirements are more specific, and the liability exposure for property owners is significant.

Pre-Contract Compliance Checklist

- Request copies of all Working at Heights certificates – verify currency
- Confirm minimum \$5 million commercial general liability insurance
- Request current WSIB clearance certificate
- Confirm AWP operator certification if aerial lifts will be used
- Review the contractor's fall protection plan for your specific site
- Confirm the contractor has completed a site hazard assessment
- Review equipment inspection records for any lifts or ladders to be used
- Confirm an emergency rescue plan is in place

Binx High-Access Cleaning

Binx Professional Cleaning holds Working at Heights certification and provides high-access cleaning for commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities in North Bay and Sudbury. \$5M liability insurance, WSIB-covered. Call (705) 845-0998 or visit binx.ca.

ABOUT BINX

Why Clients Trust Binx Professional Cleaning

\$	W	Q	G
\$5M	WSIB	Quality	100%
Liability Insurance	Full Coverage	Audit Verified	Green Certified

Binx Professional Cleaning is a locally owned and operated cleaning company serving North Bay, Sudbury, and surrounding communities in Northern Ontario. With 70+ trained cleaning professionals, we deliver consistent, verified, and insured cleaning services to over 200 commercial and residential clients every week.

We are proud partners of Cleaning for a Reason, providing free cleaning services to cancer patients in our community. We use 100% green-certified Green Cleaning Chemical products across every account. Every cleaning visit is verified through our Quality Audit inspection platform – so you never have to wonder whether the work was done.



Certified High-Access Cleaning — North Bay & Sudbury

Binx Professional Cleaning provides licensed high-access and working-at-heights cleaning for commercial, institutional, and industrial facilities in Northern Ontario. Fully insured, WSIB-covered, MOL-certified. Call (705) 845-0998 or visit binx.ca.

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