

WRAXALLS

STONE MERCHANTS AND LANDSCAPING SUPPLIES

DENGEMARSH ROAD • LYDD • KENT • TN29 9JH

T: 01797 322396

E: office@wraxalls.co.uk

F: 01797 322220

Bird Hazard

It has been suggested that it is possible for birds to pick up and subsequently drop 20mm, or 40-20mm roofing shingle (ballast), causing a potential hazard to property and personnel. In these cases 40-60mm is generally substituted.

I have been unable to substantiate any case where this can be shown to have happened. My investigation has covered the following areas:

The Internet

Using the keywords *birds, gulls, shingle, ballast, pebbles, stones, gravel, roof, damage, hazard, birdstrike* in combination, I have searched Google, Ask, Yahoo, BBC and AltaVista. While this is not exhaustive coverage I believe it would have produced results for a common problem.

RSPB

The Society has told me it is not aware of this as a problem. It is likely to be physically impossible for any bird smaller than a gull to become airborne carrying shingle, nor is this a recognised behaviour of gulls. RSPB cannot say that this activity would never be carried out by gulls but it is not described in their literature as typical.

www.rspb.org.uk

01767 693680

RIBA

The Association's Information Helpline had not encountered the problem. They directed me to a number of Building and Quarry Trade Associations as detailed below.

www.riba.co.uk

66 Portland Place
London
W1B 1AD
020 7580 5533

ROSPA

This Association's Information Library was unaware of the problem. In the most recent sample of stone- and pebble-related injuries dropping by birds did not appear¹.

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www.rospa.com

Rospa House
Edgbaston Park
353 Bristol Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B5 7ST
0121 248 2000

Building Research Establishment

This organisation carries out consultancy and testing for construction and the built environment. They participate in setting international standards and building codes including the UK building codes. Their Health and Safety Division was not aware of this as a problem.

www.bre.co.uk

BRE
Bucknalls Lane
Watford
WD25 9XX
01923 664000

National Federation of Roofing Contractors

Leading trade association for the roofing industry. Technical Officer has no previous knowledge of birds removing stones, although birds have sometimes destroyed bitumen and other roofing materials.

www.nrfc.co.uk

24 Weymouth Street
London
W1G 7LX
020 7436 0387

Quarry Products Association

Trade body for organizations supplying quarry products. Their Health and Safety Department had not heard of this as a hazard and are currently investigating to see if they can find recorded instances.

www.qpa.org

Gillingham House
Gillingham Street
London
020 7963 8000

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Roofing Industry Alliance

Previously, the Flat Roofing Alliance. An alliance of trade associations with an interest in the UK roofing industry. Sponsored by the Government and has the support of the DTI. They had no immediate knowledge of this situation and are investigating.

Fields House,
Gower Road,
Haywards Heath,
West Sussex

01444 440027

Mastic Asphalt Council

Provide technical information to the roofing trade. They had heard the situation mentioned as a concern but had never come across any occurrence.

www.masticcouncil.co.uk

PO Box 77

Hastings

TN35 4WL

01424 814400

Conclusion

This report will be updated as new information becomes available from the sources and authorities listed above.

My conclusion on reviewing the current information is that either the hazard never occurs, or that the chances of it doing so are vanishingly small.

ⁱ Victims of accidents involving being struck by/against stones, pebble or gravel, 2000-2002. These cases are taken from the Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System (HASS/LASS) database. This database is sample data taken from a sample of 16-18 UK hospitals. It does not include fatalities and the latest data available is for 2002.

Data collected by the Department for Trade and Industry

Diana Wraxall

Customer Liaison Manager

di@wraxalls.co.uk

Phone/fax 01202 734840

Mobile 07974 387308