

Warning Lines and Controlled Access Zones



Hey crew, let's huddle up for today's toolbox talk on **warning lines** and **controlled access zones** (we call them CAZ for short). This stuff keeps us safe from falls, which still cause way too many injuries and deaths on construction sites.

The goal is simple: know what these are, how to use them right, and why we never mess with them.

First, warning lines. These are barriers made of rope, wire, or chain on stanchions. They go around a roof work area to warn everyone that an unprotected edge is close. They only get used on low-slope roofs (4 in 12 or less).

For roofing work, the line sits at least 6 feet back from the edge if no mechanical equipment is running. If equipment is moving parallel to the line, still 6 feet. If it's perpendicular, bump it to 10 feet. The line has to sit between 34 and 39 inches high, get flagged with bright material every 6 feet, and hold strong. Stanchions stay upright when you tug on the line between them.

Key rule:

The area between the warning line and the edge is off limits unless you have full fall protection like a harness, guardrails, or a safety monitor watching you. Never lean on the line or use it like a guardrail. It is a warning only.

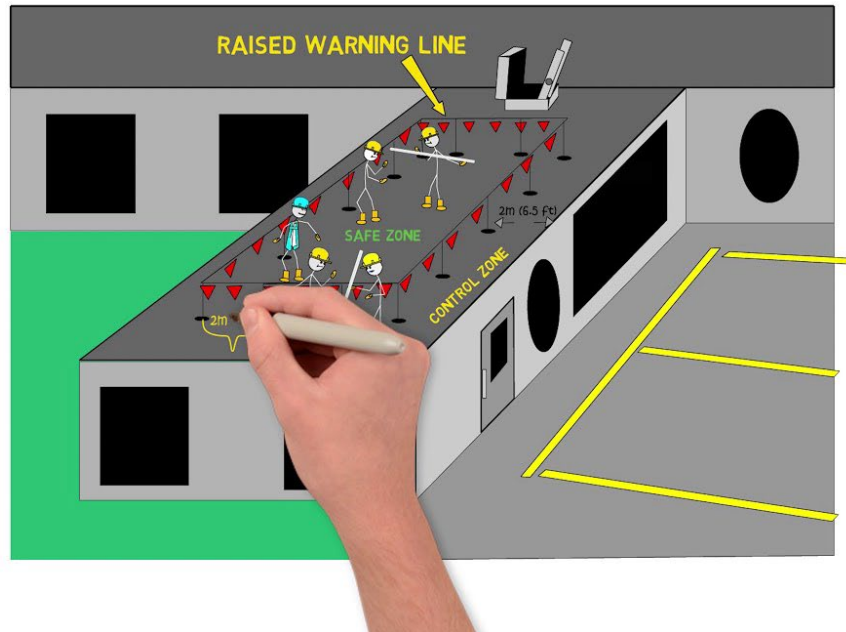
Now, controlled access zones, or CAZ. These are special work areas for tasks where regular fall protection like guardrails or harnesses can get tricky right away, such as leading-edge work or overhand bricklaying. Only the workers actually doing that job can go inside. Everyone else stays out.

We mark the CAZ with control lines (same rope or chain setup). For leading-edge work, the lines go 6 to 25 feet back from the edge. For bricklaying, 10 to 15 feet back. Lines sit 39 to 45 inches high (up to 50 inches for brick work), get flagged every 6 feet, and need at least 200-pound breaking strength. They run parallel to the edge and connect to a wall or proper guardrail on each end.

A competent person sets this up, and we post signs or have someone watching the boundary. No unauthorized entry, period. If guardrails were there and we remove a section for the day's work, we only take down what we need and put them back fast.

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Here's how these look in real life on a roof setup:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3Vi7EknwW0>

See the raised warning line keeping the safe zone clear, and the control zone right at the edge for the actual work? That's the idea. Warning lines often help define the outer boundary of a CAZ on roofs.

Common mistakes to avoid:

Crossing a line without permission or protection, skipping the flags, setting lines too close, or using flimsy tape instead of proper rope. Always inspect lines and stanchions before work starts, and report anything loose or damaged right away.

Quick questions to make sure we're on the same page: Have you ever seen a warning line set up wrong? What do you do if you spot someone in the CAZ who shouldn't be there? Any examples from this site?

Bottom line, these systems only work if we all respect them. They are not optional barriers. Follow the distances, keep unauthorized people out, and use extra protection when needed. That keeps every one of us going home safe. Any last thoughts before we wrap? Thanks for paying attention. Let's stay sharp out there.

