



AWNING SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM

Introduction

The Sutherland Shire area has many shops and commercial buildings that have awnings which project over public footways.

It is not compulsory for shops and commercial buildings to have awnings. However, they provide many benefits to the public, including protection from heat and rain, shading the premises and providing opportunities for advertising.

Some awnings are supported by steel tension rods connected to the building's fascia. These rods can fail over time for various reasons including corrosion, adverse wind and weather conditions, poor maintenance, illegal use and loading, build-up of debris inside the structure, failure at the façade or awning connection, impact by a motor vehicle, demolition of an adjoining building or awning and other reasons. The failure of a tension rod can result in an awnings collapse which can cause property damage, personal injury or death.

Many modern awnings are constructed with cantilevered beams which are integral to the structure of the building. Cantilevered awnings are much less likely to suffer catastrophic collapse. However, the legal obligations of the owner are identical to those of awnings with tension rods.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- raise awareness of the need for owners to regularly monitor the safety of their awnings;
- implement an awnings awareness program framework for owners of awnings within the Sutherland Shire Council area;
- promote an increased level of protection of public health and safety by reducing the risk of harm, injury or death which may result from the failure of an awning overhanging the Council's footways.

Scope

The policy applies to all land within the Sutherland Shire Council area.

Program

A letter will be circulated to Owners of buildings with an awning to make them aware of their responsibilities with respect to awning over public land.

Council may require an owner to obtain structural certification from a suitably qualified engineering expert following a severe storm event, flood, fire or accident which damages the awning and in the opinion of the Council is likely to be unsafe.

The owner of an awning is to bear the cost of any inspection of the awning for the purposes of this policy.