

CARELESSNESS PUTS EVERYONE IN DANGER

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Think of it this way!! You are an accident waiting to happen to you if you are not alert, attention and tuned into safety. Falls through openings occur at various sites-construction, on the derrick, rig floor and in repetitive jobs like sorting logs in a lumber mill.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Falls through openings cause many deaths and serious injuries. These incidents can also cause terrible feelings of guilt, if, say, one worker fails to securely cover a floor opening and another falls through it and dies as a result.

Examples

Two workers pick up a piece of plywood, one worker at each end, as they are cleaning up a construction site. As they move the wood, one worker falls through the hole it was covering, breaking both arms and suffering head, back and internal injuries.

Fire breaks out in a food processing plant that's no longer operating. Blinded by the smoke, a firefighter steps into an unguarded pit once used for loading. His back-injury results in permanent disability.

Electrical workers were making repairs in a crawl space below a storage room. Expecting to be gone just a short time, they left a floor panel open. An office worker walked into the storage room and fell into the hole, suffering fractures and bruises.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Here are five ways you can protect yourself and others from falls through floor openings:

1. Openings in floors, roofs and walls should be physically barricaded with guardrails or securely covered so no one can accidentally step into them. Half measures won't do it.

2. The floor opening cover should be made of a solid material capable of supporting any load placed on it. Many fatalities have occurred when someone stepped on foam board, roofing paper, or cardboard that was covering an opening.
3. The cover should be secured so it can't be easily removed. A loose sheet of plywood placed over a floor opening has set the stage for many fatal falls.
4. The cover should go over the entire opening unless guardrails are installed. If the cover doesn't adequately cover the entire opening, a worker could step on a too-small covering on a hole, causing it to break or tip into the hole.
5. The cover of an opening should be marked to warn people that it's covering an opening. Otherwise, someone could pick up a piece of plywood, not realizing it's safeguarding a hazard, and fall through it.

FINAL WORD

Falls through openings are unnecessary tragedies. Always secure, guard and/or cover these deathtraps.

QUIZ

1. **Workers who fall through a floor opening to their death only occur at construction sites.**
 - True
 - False
2. **Guard rails that barricade floor coverings only have to be installed during the usual business hours.**
 - True
 - False
3. **Loose sheets of plywood positioned over floor opening set the stage of fatalities.**
 - True
 - False
4. **All covers should be clearly marked to warn people that the covers are protecting an opening in the structure.**
 - True
 - False

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

It's the last hour before a long weekend with a construction company. All the workers are anxious to leave. You notice that there is a cover of an opening that is not marked to warn people that it covers an opening. There is no material at the site to mark the cover.

What would you do?

BEFORE THE TALK - TIPS

Before the Meeting Preparation Tips:

- Pass around the attendance sheets.

Be prepared to discuss:

- Safe work practices and policies passed around pertaining to floor openings.
- Reporting procedures related to floor openings injuries and near misses or close calls.

AFTER THE TALK- *CHECKLIST*

PROVIDED FOLLOW-UP TO WORKERS THAT DID

POORLY ON THE QUIZ

NAME: _____

DATE:

OBSERVED WORKERS

TASK(S):

DATE:

REFRESHER TRAINING

TOPIC(S): _____

DATE: _____

OTHER (DESCRIBE):

MEETING DATE: _____

LOCATION: _____

NOTES

ATTENDANCE

INSTRUCTOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

SAFETY TALK: _____