

Fall Protection at Edges, Roofs, and Holes

COMPANY

PROJECT

DATE

PRESENTED BY

General construction crews work around open edges, roof surfaces, and floor holes while moving tools and materials. A change in access or a removed barrier can leave the next worker exposed. Before starting, make sure the protection matches the work and stays in place.

Check the Work Area

- Look at the route to the work, not just the work spot. Identify open edges, floor holes, skylights, and wall openings before carrying tools or materials through the area.
- At unprotected sides and edges 6 feet or more above a lower level, use guardrails, safety nets, or a personal fall arrest system. That system uses a harness and connected equipment to stop a fall.
- Do not assume protection left by another trade is ready for your crew. Protection left by a steel erector must be inspected and accepted by the controlling contractor before other trades are authorized to use the area.

Match Protection to Roof Work

- Before roof work, ask which fall protection system applies. Do not treat a warning line as permission to work anywhere on the roof.
- For roofing on low-slope roofs with unprotected edges 6 feet or more above a lower level, guardrails, nets, or personal fall arrest systems are options. Warning lines must be part of a permitted combination, not used alone.
- On steep roofs at that height, use guardrails with toeboards, safety nets, or personal fall arrest systems. Toeboards are barriers at floor level that help keep materials from falling over the edge.

Keep Holes Protected

- Protect workers from falling through holes, including skylights, more than 6 feet above lower levels. Use covers, guardrails around the holes, or personal fall arrest systems.
- Guardrails around a hole must protect every open side. When a material-passage hole is not in use, cover it or restore guardrails along every unprotected side.
- Use covers to protect workers from objects falling through holes. Stop and report a missing cover or incomplete barrier before moving materials near the opening.

Use Equipment Correctly

- Confirm the attachment point is intended for fall arrest. Its anchorage must be independent of any anchorage supporting or suspending a platform. Ask the foreman if the connection is unclear.
- Use harnesses and fall protection components to protect people, not to hoist materials.
- Immediately remove equipment that has taken the force of a fall from service. It cannot return to use until a competent person inspects it and determines it is undamaged and suitable.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You arrive with materials and find a floor-hole guardrail section removed. Nobody is using the hole. What would you do before continuing?

Questions for the crew

1. What protection is needed at an open edge 6 feet above a lower level?
2. How must an unused material-passage hole be protected?
3. What happens to equipment that has stopped a fall?

Check the protection before approaching an edge, roof, or hole, and stop when protection is missing.

Sources: 29 CFR 1926.501, Duty to have fall protection; 29 CFR 1926.502, Fall protection systems criteria and practices; 29 CFR 1926.760, Fall protection

Drafted with AI for review by a competent person. Clever Rook writes from the official regulation text it cites, but it doesn't know your site. Check it against your conditions and your company's safety program before use. Not legal advice.

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REVIEWED BY (COMPETENT PERSON)

REVIEW DATE

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