

Floor Holes and Skylights: Cover and Protect

COMPANY

PROJECT

DATE

PRESENTED BY

Floor and roof holes can cause falls, trips, and injuries from falling tools or materials. General construction crews covering and marking openings need to protect both the people working nearby and anyone below. Skylights need the same attention as other holes.

Find the hazards before starting

- Look over the work area and the route used to carry covers, tools, and materials. Watch for floor openings, roof holes, and skylights along the way.
- Do not assume a skylight is safe to step on because it looks solid. Treat it as a hole that needs protection, not as part of the walking surface.
- Ask the foreman to explain the hazards and protection before work begins. If you cannot tell whether an opening is protected, stay clear and ask.

Match protection to the hazard

- For holes more than 6 feet above a lower level, workers must be protected from falling through by covers, guardrails around the holes, or personal fall arrest systems. A fall arrest system catches a worker during a fall.
- Covers are required to protect workers from tripping in or stepping into or through holes. Do not treat a shallow opening as harmless just because the fall distance is small.
- Covers are also required to protect workers from objects falling through holes. Think about the people below before moving tools, debris, or materials near an opening.

Cover and mark with care

- Before placing a cover, confirm how you will be protected while the hole is exposed. Do not lean over an unprotected opening to reach the other side.
- Check for covers that are damaged, shifted, or leave part of the opening exposed. Stop and report these conditions rather than stepping onto a questionable cover.
- Make markings easy for approaching workers to notice. Markings warn people about a hazard; they do not replace a cover or the required fall protection.

Keep protection in place

- Do not remove a cover just to make material handling easier. Before planned removal, ask the foreman how workers nearby and below will remain protected.
- If work exposes a new hole, stop traffic toward it and notify the foreman. Keep people away while proper protection is arranged.
- When handing off work, tell the next crew where openings are and which conditions need attention. Never assume another trade knows what is under a cover.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

While carrying a roof-hole cover, you see another cover shifted beside a skylight. A coworker is approaching with materials that block their view. What would you do before continuing?

Questions for the crew

1. Why do holes need covers even when the fall distance is small?
2. What protection is required for holes more than 6 feet above a lower level?
3. What should you do if a cover is damaged or shifted?

Find every opening, protect it properly, and stop work when a cover or other protection is missing or questionable.

Sources: 29 CFR 1926.501, Duty to have fall protection; 29 CFR 1926.21, Safety training and education

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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