



Unprotected Sides, Wall Openings, and Floor Holes

Am I In Danger?

Almost all sites have unprotected sides and edges, wall openings, or floor holes at some point during construction. If these sides and openings are not protected at your site, injuries from falls or falling objects may result, ranging from sprains and concussions to death.



This worker is not protected by any of the protective systems that are required by OSHA.

How Do I Avoid Hazards?

Use at least one of the following whenever employees are exposed to a fall of 6 feet or more above a lower level:

- Guardrail Systems
- Safety Net Systems
- Personal Fall Arrest Systems

Cover or guard floor holes as soon as they are created during new construction.

For existing structures, survey the site before working and continually audit as work continues.

Guard or cover any openings or holes immediately.

Construct all floor hole covers so they will effectively support two times the weight of employees, equipment, and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any one time.

In general, it is better to use fall *prevention* systems, such as guardrails, than fall *protection* systems, such as safety nets or fall arrest devices, because they provide more positive safety means.



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Additional Information:

29 CFR 1926 Subpart M, Fall protection. OSHA Standard.

1926.501, Duty to have fall protection

1926.501(b)(1), Unprotected sides and edges

Worker Deaths by Falls: A Summary of Surveillance Findings and Investigative Case Reports. US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Publication 2000-116, (2000, September).