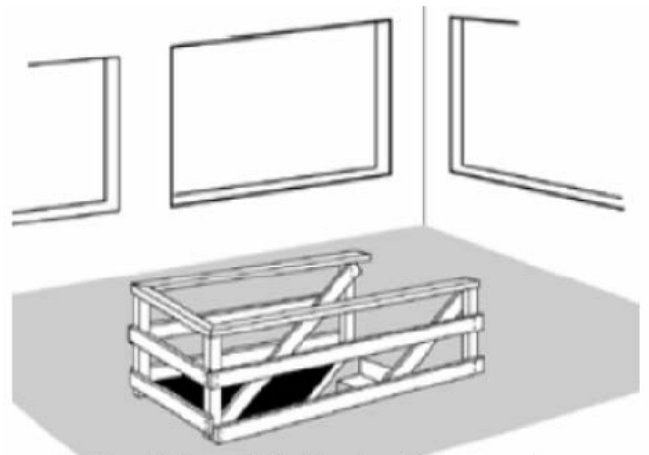


Working Safely Around Floor and Wall Openings

In the telecommunications industry employees may have to perform work around floor and wall openings. Frequently, dangers associated with these openings can be difficult to recognize. Common openings that are found in the telecommunications industry include skylights, hatch doors, stair and ladder openings, rooftops, and manholes.

In this safety bulletin are definitions of different types of floor and wall openings and information on how to identify them and properly mitigate their hazards.



Guard rail installed around all sides of a stairway except the entrance

Floor Hole

Any gap or void measuring not more than 12 inches at its largest dimension, in any floor, roof, or platform through which materials can fall.

- Some examples are; holes in flooring, pipe penetrations, and gaps between walls and scaffolding.
- Precautions shall be taken by properly covering floor holes in the instances where personnel will be affected by them.

Floor Opening

Any gap or void measuring 12 inches or more at its smallest dimension in any roof, floor, or platform through which a person could fall.

- Examples are: skylights, hatch doors, and manholes.
- Utilize leading edge protection or the proper use of temporary flooring or hard barricades.
- Use 6 foot leading edge protection identified with red tape when the fall hazard area is continuously changing or the work area is temporary.

Wall Opening

A gap or void at least 30 inches high and 18 inches or more wide in any wall or partition through which persons may fall.

- Examples are: doorways, chute openings, and rigging openings.
- Wall openings will be properly barricaded or covered.
- If a wall opening is to be covered, it must be capable of withstanding a 200pound force without failure from any direction.

If a floor opening or wall opening cover needs to be temporarily removed, an employee can be assigned to guard the area involved in order to keep people away from it. Assigned employees will not leave the area at any time and will wear appropriate fall protection gear.

Temporary Flooring

Temporary flooring is an option when a floor opening exceeds 40 inches at its narrowest dimension.

- Flooring of sufficient strength for the anticipated loads is required.
- Can be solid 2-inch lumber positively secured to prevent displacement from personnel traffic.
- Can be 3/4-inch exterior-grade plywood as long as it is properly supported.

Hard Barricade

A wooden or metal physical barricade capable of withstanding a 200-pound force from any direction.

- Wooden guardrails must be 2x4 inch boards or the equivalent. Metal guardrails must be 1½ inch nominal size handrail material or larger.
- The mid-rail can be made of a 1x6 or a 2x4 inch board. Metal handrails will be 1½ inch nominal size material.
- The toe board can be made from a 1x4 inch board or a ¼ inch flat metal plate.



Picture of a leading edge properly protected with a hard barricade.

Sources/For More Information:

www.osha.gov

www.toolboxtopics.com