

Jobsite: _____
 Foreman: _____

Date: _____
 G.C. _____

SMOHIT Safety Sense

Toolbox Talks for the Sheet Metal Industry

Falls Through Floor Openings

- A floor opening is an opening in any floor, platform, pavement, or yard that measures at least twelve inches in its smallest dimension and through which a person can fall.
- Examples of floor openings include duct and mechanical penetrations, stair or ladder openings, manholes, pits, or hatchways.
- Unprotected floor openings could result in injuries from falls and falling objects.
- You have two options to protect an opening over 6' above a lower level. You may install a standard guardrail with a mid-rail or use a hole cover.
- Cover or guard floor openings as soon as they are discovered, or as soon as they are created during new construction.
- All floor-opening covers must be made of adequate material that is strong enough to effectively support the weight of employees, equipment and materials that could be imposed on the cover at any one time. A rule is two times the expected load. However, workers should not depend on the structural integrity of floor opening covers. The covering material could give out if it is defective or improperly constructed.
- Floor opening covers must be secured so they are not accidentally displaced. This may be done by blocking them underneath or nailing or bolting them in place. Remember, if you move the cover, you are responsible for replacing it.
- Finally, mark all floor hole covers with clearly readable signs or markings that say "Caution - Hole" or " Caution - Hole Cover." The signs should include yellow and black warning colors.

Instructor Tips

- **Point out examples of floor openings on the jobsite.**
- **Point out that floor openings that contain operating elevators, dumb waiters, conveyers, etc. are excluded from these guidelines.**
- **Point out that workers should assume that any plywood on a floor may be a hole cover whether it is marked or not.**
- **Emphasize that workers should not trust the structural integrity of floor opening covers.**

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