



U. S. Department of Labor MSHA's Accident Prevention Safety Idea



Hazards at Unprotected Edges, Openings, and Holes

Recently a mill operator was fatally injured when he fell through a floor opening approximately 60 feet to the floor below. The cover for the opening was not in place. During the period of 2005 to June 2011, 32 miners were killed in falls from elevated locations.



At some point, almost all construction sites have edges, wall openings, or floor holes that pose a hazard to workers if proper precautions are not taken. Injuries from falls or falling objects may result, ranging from sprains and concussions to death. All persons must be trained to recognize and understand safe job procedures before beginning work. Mine operators should establish and discuss safe work procedures and identify and take steps to control all hazards.

Whenever workers are exposed to a fall hazard, the following precautions should be taken:

- ⇒ Protect openings through which persons may fall by installing appropriately-designed railings, barriers, or covers.
- ⇒ Ensure that barricaded areas have warning signs posted at all approaches if hazards exist that are not immediately obvious.
- ⇒ Use personal fall protection equipment when working where a fall hazard exists.
- ⇒ Safety net systems can be used to supplement harnesses and fall arrest devices.
- ⇒ Securely cover or guard floor holes as soon as they are created.
- ⇒ Replace deteriorated floor plating and grating

Design and 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.

Remember, it is better to use fall prevention systems, such as guardrails, than fall protection systems, such as safety nets or fall arrest devices.

If you have a tip you would like to pass on, you can e-mail it
to zz-MSHA-MinersTips@dol.gov.

If your tip is selected, you will receive credit in this space.

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