

ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: *LEADING EDGE FALL PROTECTION*

Falls from height are one of the leading causes of death and serious injury in the workplace, with a high personal cost to families and the subsequent financial cost to businesses.

OSHA Regulations (Standards) - 29 CFR §1926.501(b)(2)(i) states:

Each employee who is constructing a leading edge 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above lower levels shall be protected from falling by guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems.

Employees working on construction sites need to be especially careful when working around floor and wall openings.

OSHA defines these openings as:

- Hole — a gap or void 2 inches or more in its least dimension, in a floor, roof, or other walking/working surface.
- Opening — a gap or void 30 inches or more high and 18 inches or more wide, in a wall or partition, through which employees can fall to a lower level.

Objects, such as tools or parts, may fall through the holes and strike people or damage machinery on lower levels.

Protect employees on walking/working surfaces from:

- Falling through holes (including skylights) more than six feet above lower levels by personal fall arrest systems, covers, or guardrail systems erected around the holes;
- Tripping in or stepping into or through holes by covers;
- Objects falling through holes by covers.

Covers

Covers which comply with the regulations will protect employees from the hazards of holes. The following cover requirements apply:

- Covers located in roadways must be capable of supporting, without failure, at least twice the maximum axle load of the largest vehicle expected to cross over the cover.
- All other covers must be capable of supporting, without failure, at least twice the weight of employees, equipment, and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any one time.
- All covers must be secured when installed to prevent accidental displacement by the wind, equipment, or employees.
- All covers must be color-coded or marked with the word "HOLE" or "COVER" to provide warning of the hazard.

Wall Openings

Each employee working on, at, above, or near wall openings (including those with chutes attached) where the outside bottom edge of the wall opening is six-feet or more above lower levels and the inside bottom edge of the wall opening is less than 39 inches above the walking/working surface, must be protected from falling by the use of a guardrail system, a safety net system, or a personal fall arrest system. OSHA believes the most practical method of compliance for wall openings is the guardrail system because it provides protection at all times and for all employees who may have exposure at the wall opening.

For More Information visit: www.osha.gov 29 CFR §1926.501(b) leading edge & 29 CFR §1926.503 Training Requirements

Provided by the ASA – Houston Chapter Safety Committee