



Falls Through Unsecured Shafts or Openings

An injury that results in a strain, sprain, torn muscle, tendon, ligament or joint is called a MSI (musculoskeletal injury).

This Safety Talk is to raise awareness of workplace hazards that can cause a MSI.

Unprotected holes or openings at construction sites are extremely dangerous. They need to be securely covered or guarded in order to protect against injuries resulting from falls through these openings. Serious injuries and even deaths have occurred when workers have fallen through holes, shafts or other openings which were unguarded, covered by materials that were not strong enough to support the workers, or protected by improperly secured barricades or covers.

The following safety information will provide you with training on assessing hazards that could lead to a MSI and instruct on implementing control measures to prevent a MSI.

Risk Assessment/Hazards

The following are identified as hazards that may result in a MSI when working in or around openings:

- unguarded openings
- improperly secured covers on openings
- improperly labeled coverings on openings
- non-identified openings due to darkness
- covers that are made from non-substantial material
- cluttered worksites
- material falling into the opening
- carrying materials - obstructing view



Control Measures/Safeguards

Implement the following safe work procedures to eliminate or reduce a MSI:

- If you make a hole, guard it. Before cutting the hole, barricade the work area.
- If the hole must be open, install permanent barricades around the perimeter.
- If the hole is not guarded, it must be covered.

Ensure covers:

- Completely cover the opening.
- Are securely fastened.
- Are labelled as coverings for an opening.
- Are made of material that can support any load that may be encountered on the worksite.
- Never cover a hole with any type of non-substantial material such as paper, cardboard or plastic.
- Be extremely careful if you have to walk over protective paper or plastic. A hole could be lurking underneath.
- Be mindful of where you step while carrying materials.
- Protect the opening with a standard toe board or a solid enclosing screen to prevent materials from falling into the hole.
- Always notify your supervisor of any unprotected openings and ensure they are protected before working in the area.
- If you find a hole, expose it immediately for others to see, barricade it or post someone to warn others of the danger, and notify your supervisor. Even shallow holes can cause serious injuries.

Thought Provoking Questions

Have you recently worked around an opening?

Was the opening covered or protected with guardrails?

Have you known anyone who was injured falling through a hole or opening? If so, what happened?



Print and review this talk with your staff, sign off and file for COR™ / SECOR audit purposes.

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Performed By: _____

Location: _____

Name & Number of Safety Talk

Employee Name:

Employee Signature:

Concerns:

Corrective Actions:
