

Floor holes are one area where many workers forget to take the necessary safety measures to protect themselves and their co-workers. Examples can be found inside of buildings, on rooftops, and outdoors. Examples include:

- Roof drains
- Concrete penetrations for piping/ducts
- Skylights
- Unfinished stair-ways
- Pier drilled holes
- Excavations

OSHA Standard 1926.500(b) defines a hole as a *gap or void 2 inches (5.1 cm) or more in its least dimension, in a floor, roof, or other walking/working surface.*

Floor holes can be guarded or protected by guardrails, covers, and other conventional fall protection methods.

- Inspect walking and working areas and rooftops for potential floor holes, including skylights.
- Ensure roof drains and other penetrations are covered or protected to avoid trip hazards.
- Guardrails used around floor holes must meet specific construction guidelines so as to prevent falls to lower levels and erected on all unprotected sides or edges.

OSHA Standard 1926.502(b) Guardrail systems states that *guardrails must have a top rail of 42" high and strong enough to withstand 200lbs of force, mid rails must be 21" high and strong enough to withstand 150lbs of force, and **When guardrail systems are used at holes, they shall be erected on all unprotected sides or edges of the hole.***

- When used to protect employees, hole covers must be able to support 2x the weight of the employees, equipment, and their materials.
- Covers need to be color coded or marked with the word "Hole" or "Cover."

OSHA Standard 1926.501(b)(4) says that *Each employee on walking/working surfaces shall be protected from falling through holes... and from tripping in or stepping into or through holes (including skylights)...*