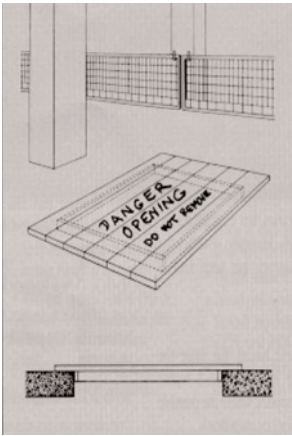


# Working Safely Around Floor and Roof Openings

Workers' falls through unprotected floor and roof openings cause many deaths and serious injuries, as well as damage to valuable equipment and machinery. These preventable accidents happen when:

- Workers pick up a piece of plywood covering a floor or roof opening to use it somewhere else; the worker will pick up the end or side of the sheet to get under it to lift it, and then fall into the hole.
- Workers step onto pieces of tarp, cardboard, or paper laid down to cover floor or roof openings, not knowing that these pieces are covering holes, and fall through the openings.
- Workers drive forklifts or other equipment over pieces of plywood, tarp, cardboard, or paper, not knowing that these cover floor openings, and fall right in.



These guidelines will help prevent needless accidents:

- Use guardrails to protect floor and roof openings. (Guardrails are the preferred method of protection.)
- If guardrails are impractical, make sturdy covers of planks, plywood, or steel plate. Do not use paper, tarp, cardboard, etc. Ensure that each cover is strong enough to support any anticipated load.
- Fasten the cover securely so that it cannot be easily removed. Use cleats on the underside of the cover that fit inside the hole; this will prevent sliding.
- Paint the cover a bright color so that it will contrast with its surroundings.
- Include a conspicuous warning, such as: ***Danger! Floor Opening! Do Not Remove!***
- Let workers know where the floor or roof openings are located, and be sure that everyone knows that these covers protect them from falling through openings in floor or roof.
- Instruct workers never to walk or drive over any piece of paper, plywood, tarp, or cardboard which has been placed on the floor or roof.
- When your employees are working at other sites, remind them that unmarked or unprotected floor opening covers may be present, and that they should take extra care in walking or driving through the work area.

Falls claim far too many good workers, for no reason. Keep all floor opening covers in place and secured.

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For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant. Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at <http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>

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