

Tool Box Talk

Elevator Shafts & Open Holes

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DID YOU KNOW?

In Canada, more than 40,000 workers get injured annually due to falls. A large number of these falls are associated with unguarded floor openings or building shafts

Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety LEGISLATION

Holes in Floors

It is the duty of an employer, contractor, or owner to ensure any openings or holes in a floor, roof, or other work surface where a worker could step or fall is:

- ✘ covered with a securely installed covering that is capable of supporting a load of 360 kilograms per square metre.
- ✘ provided with a guardrail and a toeboard.

Where the covering or guardrail and toeboard mentioned above or any part of the guardrail or toeboard is removed for any reason, an employer, contractor or owner shall immediately provide an effective alternative means of protection.

Building Shafts

- ✘ Any work platform used at the opening or inside of a building shaft must be designed by a professional engineer to withstand the maximum foreseeable load and is constructed, erected and used in accordance with that design.
- ✘ If there is no work platform installed at the level of a doorway or opening in a building shaft, an employer, contractor or owner shall ensure that the doorway or opening is covered by a solid barrier that extends from the bottom of the doorway or opening to a height of at least two metres and is capable of preventing a worker or loose material from falling down the shaft.
- ✘ An employer, contractor or owner shall ensure that at least one warning sign indicating the presence of an open building shaft is placed on a barrier erected

A Floor Opening

An opening in a floor, platform, pavement or yard that measures 300 mm (12 inches) or more in its smallest dimension

A Building Shaft

A continuous vertical space substantially enclosed on all sides that extends for two or more floors, and includes elevator shafts, ventilation shafts, stairwells, and service shafts

Why do workplace injuries and fatalities occur?

- Protective devices are not used including: proper covering, barricades, guard rails, etc.
- hole coverings are constructed of unsafe material
- poor lighting and work materials may make a floor opening difficult to see
- poor housekeeping practices
- over time, workers may become complacent
- work practices are poor due to unclear job procedures
- lack of training for workers
- workers rushing and taking short-cuts to meet deadlines

SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ Assess the worksite, identify any hazards prior to beginning work; noting any openings, holes in floors or building shafts, both secured or non-secured, and communicate with others in the work area
- ✓ Practice proper housekeeping around the construction site
- ✓ Develop and follow safe job procedures and safe work practices
- ✓ Develop and implement a fall protection plan and have it accessible on all work sites where there is a risk of workers falling
- ✓ Always use another form of fall protection when installing, removing or working near an unprotected edge

For openings in floors:

- ✓ Guard rails and toeboards surrounding the entire opening or securely cover the entire opening with material that can support any load that may be encountered on the worksite
- ✓ Install protective devices on any openings on floors or building shafts

For building shafts:

- ✓ Ensure that the doorway or opening is covered by a solid barrier that extends from the bottom of the doorway or opening to a height of at least two metres
- ✓ Covering must be capable of preventing a worker or loose material from falling down the shaft.
- ✓ Label the covering to warn of an opening or building shaft below/behind the cover (label must stand out on a busy construction site)



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