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TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS RISK MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

RISK REMINDER

Guarding Floor Holes

OSHA has developed standards to prevent workers in construction from falling through skylights and roof and floor openings. Given recent accidents, now is a good time to review the OSHA requirements for guarding floor holes. A “hole” means a gap or void 2 inches or more in its least dimension, in a floor, roof, or other walking/working surface. [1926.500(b) – Definitions]

Section 29 CFR 1926.501(b)(4) states:

- (i) Each employee on walking/working surfaces shall be protected from falling through holes (including skylights) more than 6 feet (1.8 m) above lower levels, by personal fall arrest systems, covers, or guardrail systems erected around such holes.
- (ii) Each employee on a walking/working surface shall be protected from tripping in or stepping into or through holes (including skylights) by covers.
- (iii) Each employee on a walking/working surface shall be protected from objects falling through holes (including skylights) by covers.

Strength Requirement

Floor hole covers must meet the applicable parts of 1926.502(i). Section 1926.502(i)(2) states: Covers shall 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.

Securing Requirement

Section 1926.502(i)(3) states: All covers shall be secured when installed so as to prevent accidental displacement by the wind, equipment, or employees.

Marking Requirement

Section 1926.502(i)(4) states: All covers shall be color-coded or they shall be marked with the word “HOLE” or “COVER” to provide warning of the hazard.



For more information, contact your Loss Control Consultant at (800) 252-5059, ext. 1387 or 1384.

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