



# MIOSHA Fact Sheet

## Construction Safety & Health Division

# Falls – Unprotected Sides, Wall Openings, and Floor Holes

Falls are one of the leading causes of fatalities in the construction industry. An average of 362 fatal falls occurred each year nation wide from 1995 to 1999. MIOSHA has investigated 43 fatalities over the 5-year period of 2002 through 2006 related to falls at construction work sites.

Almost all construction work sites have unprotected sides and edges, wall openings, or floor holes at some point during construction. If these sides and openings are not protected at the work site, injuries from falls or falling objects may result, ranging from sprains and contusions to death. MIOSHA [Part 1](#). General Rules, Rule 114 requires an Accident Prevention Program at every construction work site which must address fall hazards. MIOSHA, [Part 45](#). Fall Protection, addresses minimum requirements and criteria for fall protection at construction workplaces.

### How To Avoid Hazards

- Use at least one of the following whenever employees are exposed to a fall of 6 feet or more above a lower level: Guardrail Systems; Safety Net Systems; Personal Fall Arrest Systems.
- Cover or guard floor holes as soon as they are created during new construction.
- For existing structures, survey the site before working and continually audit as work continues. Guard or cover any openings or holes immediately.
- Construct all floor hole covers so they will effectively support two times the weight of employees, equipment, and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any one time. Covers must be secured and color coded or marked with the words "HOLE" or "COVER."
- In general, it is better to provide fall prevention systems, such as guardrails, than fall protection systems, such as safety nets or fall arrest devices, because they provide more positive safety means.

LARA is an equal opportunity employer/program.  
Auxiliary aids, services and other reasonable accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.



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