2024-10-28 TBT Guidelines for open holes

Open holes in walking and working surfaces present a variety of potential hazards to employees. If a hole is large enough, and unguarded, a person could fall through the hole to the surface below. And even if the hole is too small for a person to fall all the way through, someone could still step into a hole and wretch an ankle or knee, or trip and fall. And in some cases, objects lying on the surface can be accidentally knock into a hole and fall to a lower level, possibly striking a person below. When you see an open hole, it may be tempting to grab something like a piece of plywood or some sheet metal and place it over the hole to prevent someone from getting hurt. However, accidents could still occur if the cover you put over the hole is not strong enough to withstand the weight applied by a person or equipment, or if the cover get unintentionally removed or displaced and someone subsequently steps into or falls through the hole. OSHA regulations contain minimum specifications regarding covers that are placed over holes present in walking and working surfaces.

These specifications include, but are not limited to, the following: • All hole covers must 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;
• All covers have to be secured when installed so as to prevent accidental displacement by the wind, equipment, or employees; and,
• All covers shall be either color coded or marked with the word "HOLE" or "COVER" to provide warning of the hazard.
So, before you place a cover over a hole, make sure it is first approved by a Competent Person to ensure it meets all applicable specifications. To recap; any time you discover an unguarded hole in a walking or working surface, take steps to notify others of the hazard right away. Then immediately alert your supervisor, safety rep, or designated Competent Person so they can ensure a proper cover is placed securely over the hole. Or, if a cover is not feasible, they will make sure some other protective measure is taken, such as installing a guardrail around the hole, or require use of a different type of fall protection system.

By *Clicking "Mark as Read" - you are acknowledging you have read this entire (opened appropriate attachments) Toolbox Talk and understand this is company policy and will abide by regulations outlined in this safety policy. Please complete your acknowledgement within 24 hours of release. If you receive this notice, you are REQUIRED to read this content.*

Revision #2
Created 2024-10-28 14:26:48 UTC by Dale Bergman
Updated 2024-10-28 14:29:17 UTC by Dale Bergman