OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY · FALL HAZARD

VITS

Holes and edges

You can fall off an unguarded edge or into a hole whose cover is missing, shifts or breaks.

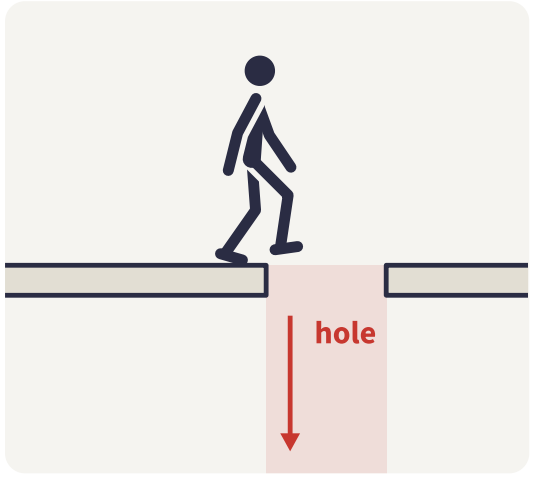
Stepping back a few paces on a building site, a worker fell 3.5 m into an uncovered hole.

Possible consequences

- Serious injury or death
- Head injury
- Fracture
- Cuts and bruises
- Time off work

HOLE IN FLOOR

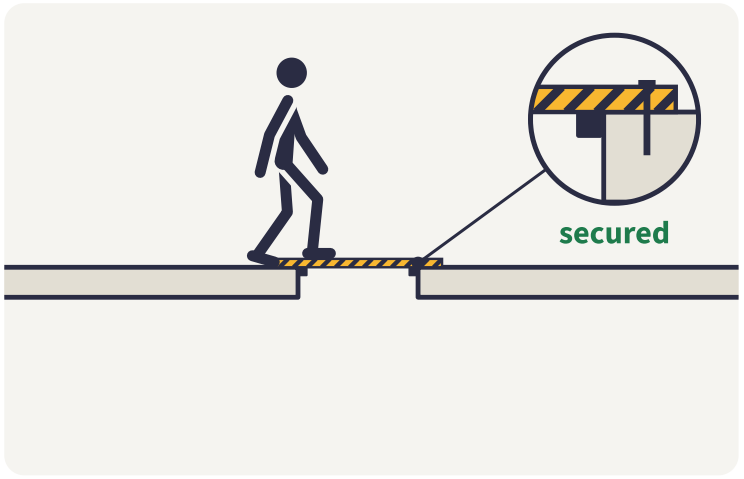
Uncovered



- Hole not covered or guarded
- Worker walks towards hole
- Next step is into the hole

HOLE IN FLOOR

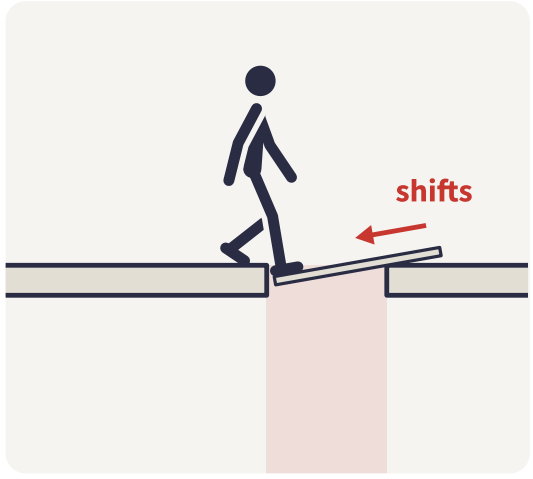
Cover fixed



- Cover is fixed and won’t shift
- Cover is marked
- Cover is strong enough

LOOSE BOARD

Shifts



- Board is not fixed
- Board shifts underfoot
- Worker can fall into the hole

Unguarded edges and uncovered holes must be protected by a guardrail, safety net or secure cover; where this is not possible, a safety harness must be used. A guardrail has a top rail at least 1 m high, a mid-rail and a toe board.

DO

- **Cover the hole at once or put up a guardrail.**
- **Fit a guardrail at the edge.**
- **Fix the cover so it can’t shift.**
- **Choose a cover strong enough for the loads on it.**
- **Mark the cover clearly.**
- **Use a safety harness while the cover is off.**
- **Refit the cover or guardrail once the job is done.**
- **Open hole or broken cover? Tell your manager.**

DON’T

- **Don’t cover holes with loose boards**
  The board can shift and drop you into the hole.
- **Don’t use a broken or flexing cover**
  It can break under you.
- **Don’t drive machinery over a cover not made for it**
  The cover can be damaged and give way under the next person.
- **Don’t lean over a hole or edge**
  You could lose your balance and fall.
- **Don’t carry loads near an unguarded edge**
  A load upsets your balance.
- **Don’t leave your harness unclipped**
  An unclipped harness won’t stop a fall.
- **Don’t place material near a hole or edge**
  It can fall down and hit someone.

REMEMBER

Cover holes. Fix covers. Guard edges.

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