

# gibca SAFETY TOOLBOX TALKS



## Floor Opening Covers and Fall Prevention

Falls cause more injuries in the construction industry than any other type of accident. About 40% of serious injuries in the building trades are due to falls from one level to another.

Falling through holes in the floor is a major contributor to this statistic. OSHA permits the use of covers to protect employees on walking/working surfaces from falling through the holes. All covers must follow the specified criteria as follows.

### Floor 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.
- Be secured when installed to prevent accidental displacement by wind, equipment, or employees.
- Be color-coded or marked with “HOLE” or “COVER” to provide warning of the hazard.

### Things to Remember When Using Floor Covers:

- All parties in the vicinity must be aware of the presence of all holes and covers.
- If there are no guardrails erected around such holes or skylights, covers must meet OSHA’s requirements (see above).
- Holes must be covered at all times, unless being worked on. A hole or skylight that only may be open for a brief period of time is not an excuse for not using a cover.

If you encounter a hole in your work area, secure the area safely (if possible and without putting yourself in jeopardy) and notify your supervisor. Make sure that it is corrected.