

FLOOR OPENINGS

Safely covering a floor opening with a piece of plywood requires more than just laying down the material over the hole or even nailing it down.

Total on-the-job safety means a total job of eliminating hazards. Half a job or inadequate or incomplete jobs of covering hole hazards can result only in half, inadequate, or incomplete accident prevention.

A recent accident illustrates the point. A carpenter on the roof of a building was cleaning the trash on the roof. The carpenter walked over a sheet of plywood lying on the roof, picked it up, took a step or two forward, and in the act of standing the plywood up, the carpenter fell through a hole in the floor. Why did this happen?

The plywood over the hole was not marked in any way and was not secured to the floor. There was no warning of any kind on it. The man mistook it for a piece of loose material on the floor.

The carpenter was not told about it. He wasn't aware of the fact that the covering on the floor was covering a hole; he mistakenly picked it up thinking it was trash, and without inspecting underneath the plywood, he walked right into the hole.

Anything less than total safety is no safety at all. The total safety attitude must be kept in mind when floor openings are being covered.

- Make sure holes are covered securely, with a cover big enough and rigid enough to prevent failure.
- Pay attention to danger warnings about floor openings. Listen when you are told about them.
- Never move a floor opening cover without permission.