

TOOLBOX TALK #37

WORKER DIES AFTER FALLING THROUGH SKYLIGHT

A heating, ventilating and air conditioning contractor was working alone while inspecting an air conditioning unit on a flat roof of a converted warehouse when he fell through an unguarded skylight to the concrete floor below. The skylight had no screen or guarding mechanism. The company did not have a written injury and illness prevention program, and no written policies and procedures were in place for any of the tasks performed or the equipment used. The victim died 19 days later. The cause of death was listed as traumatic brain injury.

To prevent similar occurrences:

- Perform a daily jobsite hazard analysis to be aware that skylights pose a risk, even if adjacent work is of a short duration. According to the report, if a JHA had been performed in this instance, the victim may have brought the lack of skylight safeguards to the attention of the building owner and taken adequate risk controls before inspecting the HVAC unit.
- Ensure building owners install skylight safety nets, screens, covers or guardrails around skylights within six feet of HVAC equipment. Had the building owner installed these protective barriers around the skylights, this incident could have been prevented, inspectors concluded.

