

TOOLBOX TALK #38

WORKING NEAR ROOFTOP HATCHES

Guarding floor and wall openings and holes is a requirement under OSHA's Fall Protection standard. Hatches, which provide workers with direct access to a rooftop where equipment is often stored or where work is being done, fall under this requirement.

Help prevent falls when working near hatches. According to the CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training, you should take several steps before work begins:

- Use a fixed ladder to access the roof. Secure an extension ladder to restrict movement if you don't have a fixed ladder.
- Install grab bars to use when transitioning from the ladder to the roof.
- Install guardrails around the open sides of the hatch.
- Install a swing gate that opens away from the hatch opening.

Once work begins, workers should:

- Make sure their path to and through the hatch is free of debris.
- Be in communication with other workers.
- Use the grab bars when accessing the hatch.
- Close the hatch lid when not in use.
- Not use the hatch lid as a place to sit.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when working at a height of 6 feet or higher.

