Working with Skylights and Roof Openings Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. **Falls Through Skylights:** Skylights are often constructed from materials like plastic or fiberglass that may not support a person’s weight, leading to potential falls.
2. **Falls Through Roof Openings:** Unprotected roof openings, such as hatches or construction gaps, pose serious fall risks if not properly guarded.
3. **Fragile Roof Surfaces:** Roof areas surrounding skylights or openings may be structurally weak, increasing the likelihood of collapse under a worker’s weight.
4. **Weather-Related Hazards:** Wet or icy conditions can make surfaces slippery, elevating the risk of falls around skylights and roof openings.
5. **Limited Visibility:** Poor lighting or obstructed views can cause workers to misjudge their footing near openings, leading to accidents.
6. **Lack of Edge Awareness:** Workers may not be aware of the proximity to skylights or openings, especially when carrying materials or equipment, increasing fall risk.
7. **Inadequate Safety Measures:** Absence of guardrails, safety nets, or personal fall arrest systems significantly heightens the danger of working near these hazards.

STATS

- In 2021, 62 construction workers died after falling through surfaces or existing openings, including skylights.
- More than 120,000 roofers alone are at risk, and when including other trades, the number of workers exposed to fall hazards from skylights and roof openings is significantly higher.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) documented 907 fall-through accidents involving skylights, highlighting the prevalence of this hazard.
- Data indicates that more workers fall through skylights than over the edge of roofs, emphasizing the critical need for proper protection of these openings.
- In Canada an analysis by Workplace Safety North reported that among 29 fatal falls from roofs, 5 were due to falls through skylights, highlighting the critical need for proper safety measures around these openings.
- Between 28 deaths from falls through skylights and 39 deaths from falls through roofs or roof openings have been reported in certain studies.