

SE TX Skylight Hazard Alert (Dec 2021)

In the past two years there has been two more fatalities and four hospitalizations related to falling through a skylight. In the past two months there has been a fatality and a hospitalization involving skylights. Using guardrails, guarding, covers, and personal fall arrest systems can prevent these falls and protect workers from serious injury or death.



SE TX FY 22 Skylight Related Incidents

- October 2021 – NAICS 517311 - A worker was walking on a roof top placing a telecommunications wire when they fell through a fiberglass roof lighting panel and landed approximately 20' below. They received a head laceration requiring staples, concussion, multiple rib fractures, punctured lung, multiple abrasions, fractured bone in hip/pelvic area.
- November 2021 – NAICS 238160 - Employee was working on a commercial roof and fell through a skylight approximately 40' onto the warehouse floor and died.

SE TX Skylight Related Fatal Incidents FY 20 and FY 21

- NAICS 238190 - Employee was performing work on a metal building roof and stepped through a skylight. He fell approximately 40' to the ground below and died from blunt force trauma to the upper body and head.
- NAICS 236220 - Employee was doing roof repairs and fell through 19' through a skylight.

SE TX Skylight Related Serious Incidents FY 20 and FY 21

- NAICS 423120 - Employee was on the shop roof helping to clean the gutters. He walked over the roof to retrieve a tree trimmer and fell 17' through a sky light. He suffered a broken wrist, elbow, and femur, internal injuries to the kidneys and liver, and facial fractures.
- NAICS 238210 - Employee was repairing a metal roof and stepped onto a flat corrugated fiberglass panel that is 8' long and 3.5' wide that lets light through similar to a sky light and fell through it about 15'.
- NAICS 238160 - A crew of six was performing roofing work in a commercial building when the wind tried to blow away the TPO that an employee was installing. He tried to grab the TPO and the wind made him back-up towards an old skylight. The skylight broke and he fell approximately 50' to the concrete floor below. He suffered a broken arm and leg and a brain injury.
- NAICS 238160 - Employee was unloading metal roofing material. He disconnected to exit the roof and fell through a fiberglass skylight and was hospitalized with a bleeding spleen.

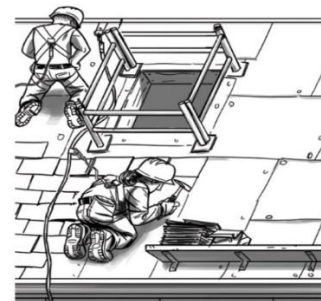
Worker Tips to protect themselves from falls through skylights and roof openings¹:

- Never sit on, lean against, or step on a skylight or any covering placed over a hole in a roof or floor. The material may not support your weight.
- Guard or securely cover all holes you have created or uncovered before you leave the work area. Other workers might not notice an uncovered hole and fall through.
- Ask your supervisor for safety procedures to follow when covering or guarding a hole.
- Obtain fall protection information from your employer or from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) office.
- Always use a personal fall arrest system (PFAS) that includes a full-body harness, lanyard, connectors, and appropriate anchorage points (tie-offs) when working over an unguarded or uncovered opening more than 6 feet above a lower level—for example (4 feet in general industry), while you are installing a skylight or ventilation unit in an opening that cannot be guarded or covered.
- If you use a PFAS, inspect it daily and report any damage or deficiencies to your supervisor. Tie off only to those anchorage points that your employer has identified as safe.
- Immediately tell your supervisor about any unguarded skylights, roof or floor openings, or other fall hazards in your workplace.

- Participate in all safety and health training programs offered by your employer.
- Follow safe work practices identified by your employer.
- Ask your employer for instructions if you do not know how to perform your job safely.

Employer Tips to help prevent worker injuries and fatalities from falls through skylights and roof openings¹:

- Develop, implement, and enforce a comprehensive, written fall prevention program that, at a minimum, complies with applicable OSHA fall prevention standards.
- Assign a Competent Person to inspect the worksite before work begins to identify fall hazards and to determine the appropriate fall prevention system for workers.
- For work around skylights and roof and floor openings, require, provide, and ensure the use of appropriate fall prevention systems that use one of the following:
 - Covers or screens
 - Railings or guardrails
 - PFAS, including a full-body harness, lanyard, connectors, and appropriate anchorage points (tie-offs)
- Conduct periodic scheduled and unscheduled inspections to ensure that the fall prevention system is used and maintained correctly and provides adequate protection against falls.
- Train workers to recognize fall hazards associated with working near skylights and roof and floor openings.
- Train workers in the correct fall prevention procedures they are to follow.



Resources

	<p>OSHA Fall Prevention Video</p> <p>https://www.osha.gov/dts/vtools/construction/skylight_fnl_eng_web.html</p>
	<p>¹NIOSH Alert Preventing Falls Through Skylights and Roof and Floor Openings</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-156/</p>
	<p>CDC/NIOSH/CPWR Skylight Preventing Falls through Skylights and Holes Infographic</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/construction/infographics.html</p>
	<p>CA Department of Public Health Skylight Safety Video</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_8cymt7wlk</p>

This information has been developed by an OSHA Compliance Assistance Specialist and is intended to assist employers, workers, and others as they strive to improve workplace health and safety. While we attempt to thoroughly address specific topics [or hazards], it is not possible to include discussion of everything necessary to ensure a healthy and safe working environment in a presentation of this nature. Thus, this information must be understood as a tool for addressing workplace hazards, rather than an exhaustive statement of an employer's legal obligations, which are defined by statute, regulations, and standards. Likewise, to the extent that this information references practices or procedures that may enhance health or safety, but which are not required by a statute, regulation, or standard, it cannot, and does not, create additional legal obligations. Finally, over time, OSHA may modify rules and interpretations in light of new technology, information, or circumstances; to keep apprised of such developments, or to review information on a wide range of occupational safety and health topics, you can visit OSHA's website at www.osha.gov. Incident narratives are based on a first report of injury and may not reflect the final finding in the incident. For questions contact Jim Shelton at the Houston North OSHA office: Shelton.james@dol.gov