

HAZARD ALERT



WORKER INJURED BY FALLING THROUGH HOLE IN ROOF



A worker suffered serious injuries recently while preparing for a roofing job. He and another worker picked up a large piece of plywood, one worker at either end, in order to remove it from the roof. The workers did not realize the plywood was being used to cover a hole that had been cut in the roof for mechanical services to the building. As they moved the plywood, one worker fell through the hole, approximately 8 metres. He broke both arms and sustained injuries to his head, back and internal organs.

WHSCC investigating officers determined the cause of the accident was failure to secure and identify the cover over the hole.

The workers had not been told about the hole in the roof and the plywood being used to cover it, and there was no sign or warning posted.

Recommended Preventive Action



- Guardrails are the preferred method for protecting workers near floor and roof openings. However, guardrails may not always be practical due to narrow access. In that case, an alternate cover must be installed and marked.
- Use planks, plywood or steel plates for covers. In some cases, pallet-type designs can make covers stronger and less likely to be removed.
- Make covers stand out with bright paint. **DANGER! OPENING. DO NOT REMOVE. DO NOT LOAD!**
- Fasten the cover securely to prevent workers from removing it and falling in the hole.
- Be sure the cover is strong enough to support any load to which it may be subjected (e.g.: the weight of a person walking across it).

Prevention Services, Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission
500 Beaverbrook Court, 4th floor, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5X4 (506) 453-2467 Fax (506) 453-7982

WHSCC
All Accidents are Preventable

Issued: July, 1998

Check out the CCOHS website, www.ccohs.ca, or call 1 800 263-8466 for health and safety