



Toolbox Talk & Safety Alert

Walking and Working Surfaces

Focus: Engineered Catwalks, Elevated Platforms, and Open Hole Protection

Why This Matters

Recently, one of our team members suffered a serious injury while walking on a BluBox catwalk at one of our construction sites. The grating under his feet was not securely fastened and had shifted from its 4-point anchors. As he stepped onto it, the grating gave way, and he fell 8 feet through the opening onto a concrete pad. Then the unsecured grating then fell through the opening and onto the worker, causing injuries to his head, shoulder, arm, and hand.

This incident could have been prevented with proper inspection and securement of the walking surface. All team members must understand that engineered walking surfaces are only safe if they are properly installed, anchored, inspected, and maintained.

OSHA Standard: 29 CFR 1910 Subpart D

This regulation requires that walking-working surfaces be:

- Capable of supporting intended loads
- Designed, maintained, and inspected regularly
- Free of hazards such as holes, gaps, loose or damaged grating
- Guarded with standard railings and toe boards when elevated

The regulation goes on to say that:

- Hazardous conditions on walking-working surfaces shall be corrected or repaired before an employee uses the walking-working surface again. If the correction or repair cannot be made immediately, the hazard must be guarded to prevent employees from using the walking-working surface until the hazard is corrected or repaired.

Key Safety Expectations

1. Secure All Engineered Walking Surfaces

- Catwalks, grating platforms, and elevated walkways must be anchored at all intended points.
- Never walk on grating or elevated platforms unless they have been confirmed as secured and stable.

2. Inspect Before Use

- Visual checks of all grating, catwalks, stair treads, and platforms must be conducted after installation and before workers get on them.
- Any sign of looseness, corrosion, or damage must be reported immediately.



3. **Guard and Cover All Openings**

- If there is an open hole, missing grating, or incomplete platform, cordon off the area immediately using cones, caution tape, or barricades.
- Install temporary covers that are marked and secured until permanent repair is completed.

4. **Keep Pathways Clear**

- Walking surfaces must be kept free of clutter, tools, cables, and debris.
- Ensure sufficient lighting and clear signage for all elevated routes.

5. **Report Hazards Immediately**

- Never assume someone else will fix it.
- If you see a loose grate, open hole, or unsecured handrail stop the work and make sure it is corrected and/or report it to your supervisor right away if immediate correction is not possible.

Real-World Incident Reminder

What happened:

- Recently a worker stepped onto an unsecured catwalk grating
- Grating had shifted, creating an opening
- Worker fell through, grating landed on him
- Result: Serious injuries to his head, shoulder, arm, and hand

Root Cause: Grating was not anchored to its 6-point system as designed. Area was not inspected or flagged as a hazard.

Let's Prevent This From Happening Again

- Secure all grating and walking surfaces
- Inspect before allowing use
- Never bypass or walk around a barricade
- Flag and repair or report all open holes or unsecured surfaces
- Speak up if you see something unsafe

Final Reminder

This incident is a stark reminder that even routine pathways can become deadly if safety protocols are not followed. We owe it to each other to walk carefully, inspect thoroughly, and act immediately when hazards are found.

Our families trust us to work safe, and we must honor that trust by looking out for one another!