

Walking & Working Surfaces

This toolbox talk is for you, the safety specialist or facilities maintenance specialist. Many injuries stemming from slips, trips, and falls are caused by a condition or environment that is contributing to these injuries. These conditions can be eliminated through a review of the work environment. Use this toolbox to assist you in reviewing your facility for hazards.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- **The workplace must be kept clean, orderly, and sanitary.** Some of the most frequently cited OSHA violations are Housekeeping related. Every floor and walkway should be kept free of objects or defects that could cause injury.
- **The workplace must be as dry as possible.** If the workplace has areas that are commonly wet, the floor should have grates, mats, raised platforms, and/or drainage.

Floor Openings & Holes

- **Floor Open**– An opening in a working surface greater than 12 inches through which an employee may fall.
- **Floor Hole**– An opening in a working surface greater than 1 inch but less than 12 inches.

Covers are a way to fix floor holes and openings. Make sure that you know how much weight each cover can hold and post this so employees are aware.

Railings are a permanent fix for floor openings. A railing by OSHA definition consists of a Top Rail (42 inches), a Mid Rail (21 inches) and a toe board when falling object are a danger (4 inches high).

For permanent ladders or stairway openings you may have the entrances free of a rail, but a swinging gate that meets railing requirements is advised.

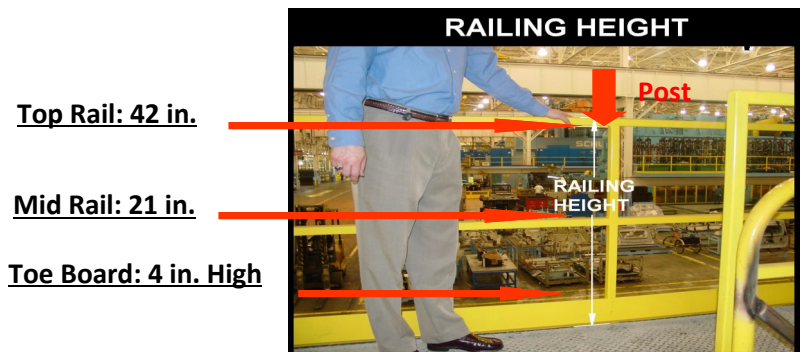
Railings are a very important piece in safeguarding your property against falls. They must adhere to the specification of a guard rail as defined by the OSHA Standard.

Aisles & Passageways



Aisles and Passageways are often heavy traffic areas in the work environment. Make sure to take a walk through these areas as often as possible to ensure compliance with the OSHA Standards as well as any company policies or markings.

- Keep these areas clear and move obstructions.
- Use permanent markings to educate and remind employees on what areas must be kept free and clear of storage.
- Aisles must be wide enough for any material handling equipment, such as fork lifts, to be used safely.



Wall Openings

Wall Openings– An opening in a wall at least 30 inches high and 18 inches wide, if there is more than a 4ft drop to the floor these must be guarded with; a rail, roller, fence, half door, or equivalent barrier.

Open Sided Floors & Platforms

Open-sided floors & platforms more than four feet from ground level must be guarded by a standard railing on all open sides except where there is an entrance to a ramp, fixed ladder, or stairway. Toe boards are required on open sides when: employees may pass, there is moving machinery, or there is equipment which falling objects could create a hazard.

Stairways

Stairways with 4 or more risers must have a standard railing or handrails.

Industrial stairways must:

- Be slip resistant with a uniform railing.
- Able to carry 5 times their expected load, minimum 1000lbs.
- Have a minimum width of 22 inches.

