

It won't happen to me

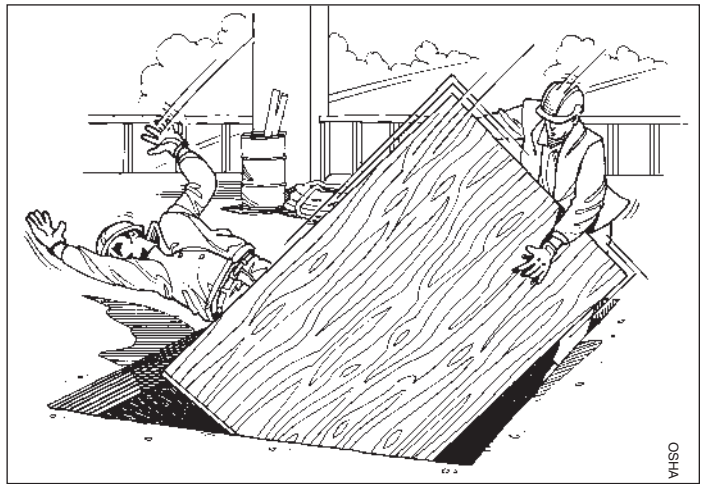
CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION begins a new monthly safety feature with "It Won't Happen to Me." Written by industry safety experts and based on true stories, the lessons taught by these real-life incidents should increase safety awareness and reduce injury and death in our industry.

A concrete contractor was placing and finishing elevated concrete slabs on the metal deck of a municipal exhibition hall. Summertime temperatures and morning rush-hour traffic forced concrete deliveries to start at 4 a.m. Power buggies were used to transport the deck concrete. To provide a runway for the buggies and to protect the finished floor, crews laid out sheets of plywood.

A different contractor was responsible for installing covers on openings in the deck. At the end of one workday, some openings were still without installed covers. To be safe, the crew decided to lay plywood over the remaining holes and to finish installing the covers on the next workday. They forgot that the concrete crew would arrive during the night to begin the deck pour.

Concrete crews arrived at 3:30 a.m. to check the layout and begin fueling and starting the power buggies; others hauled out tools. Two of the workers noticed what appeared to be some extra sheets of plywood scattered near the buggy runway, left behind—they

assumed—by their own co-workers. It seemed logical to move this extra plywood to widen the runway, providing easier passage for buggies. The two went over to the plywood panels, picked them up, and walked right into the open hole left by the other crew. They



Fall protection and properly secured and marked covers for floor holes are provided in OSHA (29CFR 1926.502(i) (3) and (4)).

fell 52 feet to the ground. One worker died that day, and the other was seriously injured.

Falls are a leading cause of death on construction sites. This seemingly innocent chain of events resulted in a tragedy. Like all fatalities, this accident affected the entire crew and everyone involved in the job right up to the company owner. The owner made a statement that has become a permanent part of the company's safety training: "Treat every piece of plywood as though it is covering a hole."



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