



## **Walking and Working Surfaces**

Many workers injured every year due to slips, trips, or falls generated by improper walking and working surfaces. Most of these accidents can be prevented if proper safety precautions are initiated. Slips, trips, and falls can be caused by conditions such as ice, standing water, grease, polished floors, loose flooring or carpeting, uneven walking surfaces, poorly placed electrical cords, and damaged ladder steps. The controls needed to prevent these hazards are usually relatively simple, such as keeping walkways and stairs clear of debris, coiling up extension cords and hoses when not in use, keeping electrical and other wires out of the way, wearing appropriate footwear, and clearing parking lots, stairs, and walkways in snowy weather. The following provides information on walking/working surfaces hazards and prevention.

### **Housekeeping**

All work areas, hallways, storerooms, and restrooms shall be kept clean, orderly, sanitary, and free of slip, trip and fall hazards. Sufficient illumination must be provided in all areas. All exit doors and egress paths shall be kept free of obstructions at all times.

### **Aisles and Passageways**

Where mechanical handling equipment is used, such as forklifts, sufficient clearances shall be maintained for aisles, at loading docks, through doorways and wherever turns or passage must be made. Aisles and passageways shall be kept clear and in good repairs, with no obstruction that could create a hazard.

### **Guardrail Systems**

Guardrail systems consist of a top rail 42 inches high and must withstand a force of at least 200 pounds. A midrail must be located midway between the toprail and toeboard and be able to withstand a force of at least 150 pounds. A toeboard is 3.5 inches from the working level and must withstand 50 pounds.

### **Floor Loading Protection**

Whenever loads or single items exceeding 350lbs are to be placed on roofing structures, employees must determine the safe load capacity before taking this action. Loft areas used for storage must have the rated capacity posted.

### **Covers and Guardrails**

Covers and/or guardrails shall be provided to protect personnel from the hazards such as open pits, tanks, vats, ditches, stairways, ladderways, hatchways, skylights, pit/trap doors, manholes, floor holes, chutes, window wall openings, open-side floors and



platforms. Skylight floor openings and holes shall be guarded by a standard skylight screen or a fixed standard railing on all exposed sides.

### **Guarding Floor and Wall Openings**

Floor openings shall be guarded by a standard guardrail system, including a toprail, midrail, and if needed a toeboard. Wall openings from which there is a drop of more than 4 feet shall also be guarded.

### **Protection of Open-Sided Floors and Platforms**

Open-sided floors or platforms 4 feet or more above adjacent floor or ground level shall be guarded by a standard guardrail system on all open sides, except where there is entrance to a ramp, stairway, or fixed ladder.

### **Stairways**

Stairs having four or more risers shall be equipped with standard stair railing or handrails.

**SAFETY REMINDER**  
**A clean work area is a safer work area!**