



H S E

HEALTH SAFETY ENVIRONMENTAL



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Hole Cover in Deck Falls, Causing Dropped Object Hazard

Recently, an offshore crew experienced a dropped object event when a hole cover fell through the hole.



Corrosion over time led to the tabs holding the cover in place to let go, causing it to fall through to the deck below. Fortunately, it did not hit anyone or cause any damage. A black plastic containment berm had been placed over the hole and a cutting bow was landed near it. When a worker walked next to the cutting box, where the hole was hidden by the berm, the tabs welded to the insert cover let go, causing the worker's foot to go about 6 inches deep.

Under different circumstances, this could have been a very serious incident. Through luck and good fortune, we can report this as a near miss.

OSHA Regulations tell us that a hole in a deck big enough to put your foot through must be protected and identified in certain ways:

How must it be protected?

1. **Guardrails** – Sturdy barriers around the opening to prevent falls.
2. **Covers** – Strong, secured panels placed over the opening.
 - They must Support at least twice the expected load (people, tools, equipment)
 - Must be marked “Hole” or “Cover” to warn people.
 - Must be secured so they don't move when stepped on.

Key Takeaway:

If you can fall through it, it must be guarded, covered, or both.

Protection must be **clearly marked, strong, and secure.**

Check all deck openings – Make sure they're safe for you and your teammates.

SAFETY ALERT