

**WAC 296-307-25009 What protection must an employer provide for floor openings?**

(1) Every stairway floor opening must be guarded by a standard railing constructed according to this section. The railing must guard all exposed sides (except the entrance to the stairway). Infrequently used stairways where traffic across the opening prevents using a fixed standard railing (as when located in aisle spaces, etc.), may use an alternate guarding method. In these cases, the guard must have a hinged floor opening cover of standard strength and construction and removable standard railings on all exposed sides (except at the entrance to the stairway).

(2) Every ladderway floor opening or platform must be guarded by a standard railing with standard toeboard on all exposed sides (except at the entrance to the opening). The passage through the railing must have either a swinging gate or offset so that a person cannot walk directly into the opening.

(3) Every hatchway and chute floor opening must be guarded by one of the following:

(a) A hinged floor opening cover of standard strength and construction with standard railings, or a permanent cover with only one side exposed. When the opening is not in use, the cover must be closed or the exposed side must be guarded at both the top and middle by removable standard railings.

(b) A removable railing with toeboard on a maximum of two sides of the opening and with fixed standard railings and toeboards on all other exposed sides. The removable railings must be kept in place when the opening is not in use and should be hinged or mounted to be easily replaced.

(4) When employees must feed material into any hatchway or chute opening, you must provide protection to prevent people from falling through the opening.

(5) When practical, the area under floor openings must be fenced off. Otherwise, the area must be plainly marked with yellow lines and telltales hanging within 5-1/2 feet of the ground or floor level.

(6) Where floor openings are used to drop materials from one level to another, audible warning systems must be installed and used to indicate to employees on the lower level when material is dropped.

(7) Every skylight opening and hole must be guarded by a standard skylight screen or a fixed standard railing on all exposed sides.

(8) Every infrequently used pit and trapdoor floor opening must be guarded by a floor opening cover of standard strength and construction that should be hinged in place. When the cover is not in place, the pit or trap opening must be constantly attended or protected on all exposed sides by removable standard railings.

(9) Every manhole floor opening must be guarded by a standard manhole cover. The manhole cover may be left unhinged. When the cover is removed, the manhole opening must be constantly attended or protected by removable standard railings.

(10) Every temporary floor opening must have standard railings or must be constantly attended.

(11) Every floor hole that people can accidentally walk into must be guarded by either:

(a) A standard railing with standard toeboard on all exposed sides; or

(b) A floor hole cover of standard strength and construction that should be hinged in place. While the cover is not in place, the floor hole must be constantly attended or protected by a removable standard railing.

(12) Every floor hole surrounded by fixed machinery, equipment, or walls that prevent people from walking into it, must be protected by a cover that leaves openings a maximum of one inch wide. The cover must be securely held in place to prevent tools or materials from falling through.

(13) Where doors or gates open directly on a stairway, a platform must be provided so that the swing of the door does not reduce the platform width to less than 20 inches.

[WSR 97-09-013, recodified as § 296-307-25009, filed 4/7/97, effective 4/7/97. Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.040, [49.17.]050 and [49.17.]060. WSR 96-22-048, § 296-306A-25009, filed 10/31/96, effective 12/1/96.]