



## Lack of Guarding Around a Skylight Leads to Multiple Injuries

A USW member was seriously injured when he fell through an unguarded skylight. Two USW production workers were instructed by their supervisor to do roof cleanup tasks, they were specifically assigned to sweep water from a building's roof.

At some point during a work break, one worker went to use the restroom, and the other worker remained on the roof. It's unclear how the worker that stayed on the roof fell through the unguarded skylight which ultimately caused him to fall approximately three stories.

The injured worker regained consciousness surrounded by co-workers and was immediately transported to a hospital with multiple injuries.



### Recommendations:

- If possible, eliminate skylights to remove the risk of falls altogether, and add lighting solutions, such as LED panels to maintain natural or efficient lighting without requiring skylights.
- Install skylight guards, screens or cages that are permanently fixed in place to prevent workers from falling through skylights that comply with OSHA and consensus standards, as well as the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Secure skylight covers and screens that can support at least twice the expected load (including workers, tools, and materials) to ensure they can handle accidental contact that comply with relevant fall protection safety standards.
- Skylights must be installed in accordance with local building codes and regulations, as well as the manufacturer's instructions.
- Install a guardrail system around skylights where feasible, ensuring it meets height and strength requirements for fall protection.
- Implement a permit system for roof access to control and monitor who is allowed to work near skylights.
- Restrict unnecessary access to areas near skylights by designating zones and marking hazardous areas clearly.
- Label skylights with clear warning signs to alert workers that they are not load-bearing and should not be stepped or sat on.
- Design and require personal fall arrest systems where workers wear properly fitting harnesses connected to a properly rated anchor point if no other protective measures (guards, covers, railings) are in place.
- Provide comprehensive training for all workers on fall hazards related to skylights, such as proper use, inspections, maintenance of fall protection and fall arrest equipment, emergency procedures, including fall rescue plans.



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This hazard alert is based on an actual incident, and reflects our best understanding of the incident at the time it was written. However, many incidents have multiple causes; this alert may not cover all of them. The purpose of the alert is to illustrate workplace hazards; it is not intended to be a comprehensive report on the incident.