



## Safety Alert



# DANGERS OF PENETRATIONS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

issued by WorkCover NSW

7 August 2003

WorkCover warns of the danger of unsecured and unmarked covers over penetrations on construction sites.

### Background

There have been a number of incidents recently where covers placed over penetrations have been mistakenly removed by workers, believing them to be rubbish or timber left lying on the platform or floor, and then falling through the exposed penetration as they walk off with the cover.

The most recent incident occurred in early August 2003 and involved the removal of a section of form ply, covered in broken roof tiles, from a scaffold deck. The form ply was covering a gap between two scaffold bays, rather than simply being a rubbish board. Two workers lifted the board and one of them fell through the exposed gap as they walked off with the section of ply with rubbish on top.

### Recommendations

Where penetrations exist that present the risk of a fall or other injury they should be covered or the risk controlled by other measures, such as guard railing. Where covers are used they should be:

1. Structurally adequate for the purpose and installed in a manner to prevent the creation of additional hazards, eg trip hazard.
2. Secured to prevent removal without the use of a tool. This is to prevent them being inadvertently knocked or blown out of place as well as alerting persons that they are there for a reason.
3. Identified to indicate that they are a cover and not scrap material.

Persons working on site should be advised of the existence of such penetrations, the associated covers, or other control measures, and how to identify them. This could be by inclusion in the site induction, or tool box talks should the covers be installed after the site induction has been undertaken.

### Further information

For further information please contact the WorkCover Assistance Service on 13 10 50.

PRODUCED BY THE CONSTRUCTION TEAM

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**PRINT THIS LEAFLET AND PLACE IT ON YOUR NOTICE BOARD AT WORK**



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