



TAILGATE SAFETY

GUARDRAILS AND COVERS

Guardrails and covers are two of the methods for fall protection and should be used when a person could fall 7-1/2 feet or greater from scaffolds, runways, ramps, elevated platforms and surfaces, or through roof, floor, or wall openings. Guardrails and covers have specific requirements as set forth by Cal/OSHA:

Guardrails

- Must be able to withstand loads of 13 lbs per linear applied in any direction
- Must be 42"-45" high from the floor to top of the rail and posts must not exceed 8 foot centers
- Must have a midrail. The midrail must be at least 1" x 6"
- The top rail and posts must be at least 2" x 4"
- Must have a 4" high toeboard strong enough to stop tools and materials from sliding or rolling over the edge. If a 4" toeboard isn't enough protection, then paneling or screening should be used.
- The material used must be good, not defective, no splinters. May use 1 1/2" steel pipe or 2" x 2" x 3/8" angle for posts, top, and midrail. Other materials of equal or greater strength may be substituted.

Covers

- Must be capable of safely supporting the greater weight, either a 200 lb person or the weight of workers and equipment placed thereon.
- Must be placed securely to prevent accidental removal or displacement
- Must be clearly marked with legible letters not less than one-inch high stating: "Opening – Do Not Remove". Can be stenciled, painted, or be a printed sign/sticker (pressure sensitized).

Guardrails and/or covers must be used in the following instances:

- All stairs and stairwells need railings, toe boards, and handrails
- All floor, roof, and skylight openings shall be guarded by railing and toeboards or be covered securely.
- Ladderway floor openings or platforms need railings
- Pits and trap door openings need railings or covers
- Manhole floor openings shall be guarded by covers or protected by standard railings.
- Temporary floor openings shall have standard railings
- Extension platforms outside a wall opening. One side may have removable railings to facilitate material handling.
- Elevator shafts that do not have a cage or are not enclosed shall be guarded on all open sides
- Excavation cross-overs need railings where the excavation is over 6 feet deep and over 30 inches wide.
- Dredge discharge pipelines used as walkways need at least a top rail.
- Catwalks and platforms need railings over water that is deeper than 4 feet.
- Exposed edges of all temporary planked or temporary metal decked floors at the periphery of skeleton steel structure more than 30 feet in height need railings.
- Perimeter and openings need railing as soon as falsework is erected.
- At demolition sites, wall openings need railings – except the ground floor and the floor being demolished.

Don't be a statistic – Use the guardrails and covers provided.

Training Tips: a) If onsite, show guardrail structure as discussing it, b) Be specific to the site you are working on – where are the holes and guardrails?, c) Talk about the risks of falling, ask questions like what conditions can increase your chance of falling from a height? (weather, clutter, etc.) d) Discuss statistics – average of two construction workers die per day due to falling from heights.



North Coast Builders Exchange ~Tailgate Topics
Ph (707) 542-9502 Fax (707) 542-2027