



Cal/OSHA has a safety regulation that specifically addresses openings and skylights on a roof. If anyone is going to be within 6 feet of a skylight, one of these safety measures must be in place:

- A skylight screen installed above the skylight
- A skylight screen installed under the skylight assembly
- A cover—including the skylight itself—that's strong enough to withstand 400 pounds or twice the weight of the employees, whichever is greater (there should be a rating label)
- A net that's strong enough to absorb 400 pounds dropped from 3.5 feet above the net
- The use of a personal fall arrest system (PFAS) or fall restraint system if the skylights are not covered or while removing skylights to install covers over the openings
- A guardrail system positioned around the entire perimeter of the skylight

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

When someone sits, stands, walks, or falls on top of a skylight, chances are it will not support their weight. Below the skylight is typically a very long scary drop to a very hard surface. When working around a skylight, it is important to note its presence even if your work is not directly related to the skylight. The smallest misstep could lead to a fall resulting in a major injury or worse.

Even though skylights leave no obvious openings on the roof, the plastic “bubbles” that cover the skylights can lead to a false sense of security. You may see the glass or plastic covering and believe it is strong enough to withstand your weight. However, as the UV rays from the sun hit the plastic covers on the skylights, the sun's rays can make the plastic cover very brittle. Some skylights lay flat, flush with the roof, and are difficult to see. If a worker accidentally steps onto or falls into the plastic bubble covering or a flat skylight, there is a good chance the covering will break, leading to a potentially catastrophic fall.



OUR STRATEGY

UCR has several rooftops with exposed skylights. We have identified these and are working on a plan to install covers. In the meantime, you need to use fall protection when working near unprotected skylights. Temporary guardrails, fall restraint, or fall arrest are all viable options. Discuss the situation with your supervisor to determine how best to do your work safely and/or contact EH&S for guidance. Don't take chances.