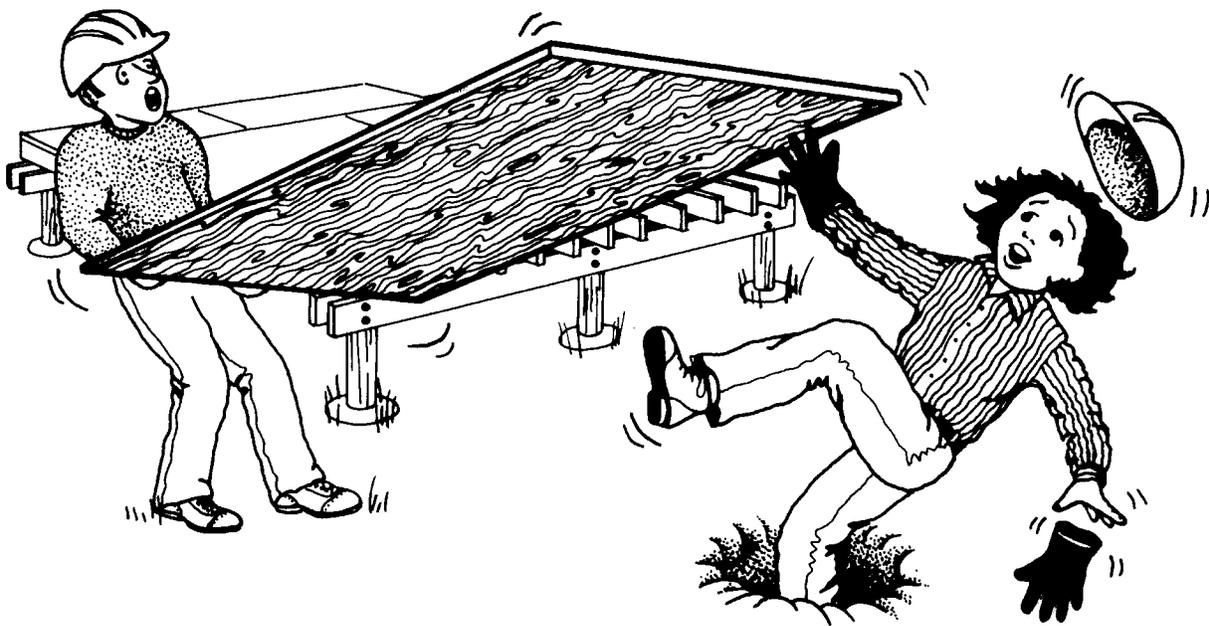


Working Safely Around Holes and Other Openings

It was a small hole—barely big enough for a man to fit through. Tom was going to cover it in the next hour. He grabbed a sheet of 4-by-8 plywood from the stack, threw it over the hole and went to lunch. Along came Maria and Jay, who needed just such a sheet of plywood. Wondering why someone had left it lying on the ground instead of stacking it, they decided to use it. With the plywood between them, they didn't see the open hole. Suddenly, Jay was standing alone with one end of the plywood. Maria had fallen into the hole.



You may think this story is humorous since Maria escaped with only a few bruises, but it could have been more serious. You can bet that Tom will never make this mistake again. Follow the safety guidelines below for safely securing floor openings:

- **Never leave a floor opening uncovered or unguarded, even for a few minutes.**
- **Select a covering that's big enough to overlap the edge of the hole generously.**
- **Make sure the floor covering is thick enough to cover the hole without sagging in the middle. The bigger the opening, the thicker the covering should be.**
- **Nail down the cover, even if it's only going to be there for an hour.**
- **Erect a simple barricade or rope off the area and post warning signs.**
- **If you see an uncovered floor opening, secure it and report it immediately.**