

**INCIDENT TYPE:**

**OPEN HOLES ARE DANGEROUS – KEEP SECURELY COVERED**



**George Leslie Ltd**

An employee was seriously injured on a Purac Leslie site when he fell 6m through a hole in a chamber roof slab. This resulted in multiple fractures and extensive bruising and he was hospitalised for 4 days. It is a matter of good fortune that the consequences were not even more severe. A Major Injury report has been submitted to HSE.



**INCIDENT**

The injured person was a cement finisher who observed that the tracks of a mini-digger were approaching a new concrete slab and instinctively went to utilise plywood to place under the tracks of the mini-digger. The injured person stated he did not realise the plywood was covering a hole with exposure to a 6m fall. It was not securely fixed to prevent its manual removal and it was not marked/signed to indicate the danger below.

**LESSONS TO BE LEARNED**

Holes in floors, concrete slabs etc. represent a serious hazard, and must be effectively and securely covered, immediately the hazard is created. In the above case this was when the soffit formwork was struck which left holes in the roof slab. Suitable covers must be easily and readily available and must remain in place at all times. Ideally the permanent cover should be immediately and securely fixed. Where this is not possible, temporary covers (preferably steel plates) should be used.

All covered openings must be signed and marked to alert persons to the danger the cover is protecting. Appropriate black on yellow hazard warning signs can be procured for this purpose.

**LESSONS TO BE LEARNED – continued**

Where access is required and covers are to be removed this is to be subject to a specific risk assessment to address guarding requirements and safe access/egress.

Management and Supervision must ensure the effectiveness of covered openings is checked on a daily basis. It is advisable that records are kept detailing this inspection.

**Open holes are dangerous.....**

- **Make them safe**
- **Securely cover**
- **Sign & mark**