

## Safety Flash: Incident with Recordable Injury

**Incident:** A crew was installing floor plating around a toe-in alignment machine that had been placed into an existing 7-foot-deep pit. The first plate did not sit correctly in the opening. An ironworker walked around the plate to move it into position. As he was using a bar to move the plate, he stepped backward, falling into the Visqueen-covered opening on the deck of the alignment machine. He caught himself on the side of the opening, injuring his right side.



### Possible contributing factors

- The workers were not using harnesses and retractables because they didn't fully understand fall protection requirements that mandate their use within 15 feet of an unprotected edge.
- The owner directed the crew to cover the equipment upon delivery and before installation to protect it from dust.
- The team recognized fall hazards during planning for working around the pit and during equipment infill, but did not consider the hazard of the opening in the alignment machine after it was installed.
- When the equipment was covered with Visqueen on the ground, workers did not recognize the potential fall hazard once the equipment was set in place and did not protect the opening.
- The opening in the toe-in machine was not evident to the workers, as the machine had been covered with Visqueen before placement.
- The crew did not recognize the hazard created by the designed openings in the toe-in machine and did not protect the openings before or after setting the machine.
- The worker was not wearing fall protection in an area that was designated as 100 percent fall protection required.

### Primary contributing factor

- When the equipment was covered with Visqueen on the ground, workers did not recognize the potential fall hazard once the equipment was set in place and did not protect the opening.

### Possible solutions

- When planning work, be sure to address existing and future conditions, such as fall hazards, pinch points, etc. that are created by construction or equipment installation.
- Educate all workers on fall protection requirements and methods.
- Use Personal Fall Arrest Systems within 15 feet of an opening or edge that is not protected by a fall protection system.

### Action plan

- Investigate changing owner document to address hazards introduced due to construction and equipment installation.
- The contractor immediately conducted a stand down with the toe-in alignment crew to go over fall protection requirements. A second stand down was conducted with the remaining crews on site.
- The openings in the toe-in machine were covered, marked and secured in place.
- The pre-task analysis was revised to address the covering of openings in the toe-in alignment machine.

### Keep improving

Your health and safety are the most important part of every project. We need *your* help to eliminate unsafe behaviors and conditions. If you see a safer and better way to do a task, see your supervisor, or contact GEM Safety: Tim Clark – 419 /720-2699; Bill Cornett – 419 /720-2728. To get personal protection equipment from the warehouse, call 419/720-2688.