

Guarding Wall Openings and Holes (29 CFR 1910.23(b))

A wall hole is defined as any opening between 1 and 30 inches high, and of any width. A wall opening would be one of a minimum 30 inches in height and 18 inches in width through which a person might fall. Any wall opening with a potential fall distance of 4 feet must be guarded with any of a variety of methods, including railings, grab handles, a door, or some other method to prevent an employee from falling through the opening. Window wall openings may also need barriers to prevent falls if the sill is lower than 3 feet from the walking surface (such as a stair landing).

According to 1910.23(e) barriers for wall openings have requirements in construction and design. For instance, barriers must be able to withstand a pressure of 200 pounds applied in an outward or downward direction to any of the railings or bars.

The OSHA standards for walking and working surfaces can be found at 29 CFR 1910.22-.30.