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ACCESS PLATFORM DECKING SYSTEMS UPPER FLOOR ACCESS HATCHES FOR INSTALLERS/DISMANTLERS

What is the risk?

Life changing injuries have been experienced by site workers due to inadequate and unplanned access arrangements on the upper floors of construction sites. Without planning, operatives often make “DIY” hatches which make the floor appear to be complete, but when someone steps on the cut out area, the floor gives way and the worker falls to the level below.

Types of Access Hatch

Hatch Type	Suitable for	Description
Materials	Materials only	Small hatch that doesn't allow an operative to fall through the floor if left open
Personnel	Personnel only	Large hatch which allows ladders to be pushed through and allow access and egress of personnel only. Should not be left open and isn't designed for materials to be passed through without further control measures.
Integrated	Materials and personnel	Incorporates a number of small hatches within a large hatch to allow for personnel and materials to pass through. Different hatches / combinations of hatches are opened dependent upon the intended use.

Good and bad practice...

Good practice - the correct type of access hatch has been installed and is being used safely.



Bad practice - a section of floor has been removed and a temporary / sacrificial joist has been installed in an attempt to support the weakened floor.



5 KEY POINTS:

1. Ensure you receive a site induction
2. Ensure you receive, understand and work in accordance with the RAMS
3. Carry out a visual inspection and report any issues
4. Always use access hatches to gain access to the upper floor
5. Stop working if you feel anything is unsafe and report to your Supervisor

Useful references:

- FASET APD-03 Upper Floor Access Hatches
- FASET Access Platform Decking Guidance Note
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005

Considerations for INSTALLERS / DISMANTLERS

- Ensure you have received a site induction;
- Ensure you have received & understood the risk assessment & method statement (RAMS) for your work;
- Ensure you and your colleagues are working in accordance with the RAMS;
- Confirm with the clients' Site Manager that the upper floor has been finished, is free from defects, and is safe to work on;
- Prior to accessing the floor, check from below for any obvious defects such as missing or dislodged floor panels;
- Always use the access hatches provided to gain access to the upper floor of new build properties (or safe access from external scaffold);
- Use edge protection if the access hatch is to remain open and the void left is large enough for an operative to fall through;
- Once on the upper floor, carry out a visual inspection to check that the flooring panels look sound and that they are not covered in debris. If there are any issues, speak to the site manager so that issues can be rectified / the floor cleared;
- Provide information or ideas to your Supervisor that you think could make your work safer;
- Stop working if you feel anything is unsafe and report to your Supervisor.

