Working Near Skylights Fatality File

An employee stepped on a skylight and fell while he was working on air conditioning and heating units on a mall roof. He fell about 20 feet to the floor of the mall’s center court. It appears that the worker did not see the skylight—possibly due to snow—and stepped on it. The worker was taken to the hospital in critical condition with major trauma to the head.

Violations: The incident is currently under investigation, meaning no violations are official. It appears that the skylight was covered with snow, so the worker did not know that it was there. However, the skylight was not surrounded with protective coverings or guardrails.

Regulations Broken: The incident is currently under investigation, but it seems that the mall broke several regulations, including OSHA 1910.23(a)(4) and ANSI A1264.1 – 2007 Section 3.4.

Prevenative Solutions: The mall could have hired workers to mark the location of skylights before the snow fell. Also, the snow could have been removed using an aerial lift, before allowing workers to climb on the roof. The aerial lift makes snow removal much safer by keeping the workers off the slippery roof and away from hazards. It also provides an anchor point for fall protection equipment. If the snow had been properly removed, he would have seen the skylight and potentially shielded it with protective covering or guardrail. He then could have seen the skylight and properly covered it with a protective covering or guardrail.