

Produced by the Access Industry Forum (AIF) and FASET, and supported by the Home Builders Federation.

# ACCESS PLATFORM DECKING SYSTEMS UPPER FLOOR ACCESS HATCHES

## 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...

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



Below: 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.



Below: Bad practice - an operative was seriously injured when he stood on the removed section of the floor, causing the hatch to dislodge and he fell to the floor below.

## 5 KEY POINTS:

1. Give early consideration of access to upper floors
2. Any alterations to upper floors should be adequately designed and signed off prior to any access
3. Plan the works to consider safe access and working area - before work commences
4. Only use designed and tested access hatches
5. Ensure control measures are suitable and sufficient



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## Considerations for SITE MANAGERS / PROJECT MANAGERS AND DEPUTIES

- Give early consideration of access to upper floors to avoid unplanned and poorly designed access hatches being installed and being used;
- Upper-level timber floors are still temporary until fully completed and therefore they should be part of the main contractors' site inspection/quality and monitoring control processes and Temporary Works Register;
- Any alterations to upper floors should be adequately designed by a competent Temporary Works Designer and signed off by the Temporary Works Coordinator prior to any access (includes the provision of access hatches and temporary edge protection systems);
- Plan the works so that Access Platform Decking installers' safety requirements are considered prior to work commencing, including access to and from upper floors, as well as a safe working area when on the floor;
- Identify and install (in accordance with the Temporary Works Design), the correct type of access hatch, and use in accordance with the manufacturer's user instructions;
- Only use designed and tested access hatches;
- Where it has been identified that Edge Protection is required, ensure the system has been designed and calculated in accordance with BS EN 13374 Class A and installed in accordance with the Temporary Works Design;
- All temporary access arrangements should be checked and handed over as compliant by a competent person prior to works starting in accordance with BS 5975: 2019 - Code of practice for temporary works procedures and the permissible stress design of falsework;
- Communicate the location of access hatches to all workers, including Access Platform Decking installers;
- Ensure control measures are suitable and sufficient.

### Useful references:

- FASET APD-03 Upper Floor Access Hatches
- FASET Access Platform Decking Guidance Note

These can be downloaded free of charge from:

[www.faset.org.uk/guidance/access-platform-decking](http://www.faset.org.uk/guidance/access-platform-decking)

- The Work at Height Regulations 2005

[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/735/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/735/contents/made)

