



## WALLS, CEILINGS, AND FLOORING TRADE

### REMOVAL OF WALLS

#### PROJECT OVERVIEW

It is always tricky when removing walls and maintaining proper structural support, as a General Contractor (GC) found out when hired for a commercial kitchen project. Remember, always think about structural support.

#### WALL REMOVAL ISSUES

The GC was asked to remove two walls and add headers to create a more open space.

**The GC removed the walls with no support bracing holding up the ceiling.**

- When attempting to install the headers, the GC noticed the ceiling sinking on both sides of the beams. That made it impossible for the headers to fit in the proper spot.
- The header issue caused the sheetrock ceiling to crack in multiple areas.

Ceiling jacks and lifting timbers raised the ceiling, allowing headers to be installed properly. Then, the sheetrock ceiling could be repaired.

**Not bracing the ceiling on either side of the wall before removal caused a dangerous situation.**

- The ceiling could have collapsed, injuring someone beneath it.
- Before removing any walls, the crew should use proper bracing to ensure a safe working environment.

#### LESSONS LEARNED

**The GC could have faced a hefty fine if the local building department inspector had noticed the mistake.**

- The loss was about \$8,000 for the ceiling and sheetrock reconstruction. Also, there was a work stoppage cost.

**Before removing the walls:**

- The foreman needed to instruct his crew to brace the ceiling on both sides of the walls set to be removed.
- The bracing type depends on how much weight it holds up—an engineer should be consulted before removing any load-bearing structures.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have we consulted a building engineer to ensure safety before removing any walls?
2. Before wall removal, are you aware of the proper positioning of all bracing?
3. Do we know what material is needed for bracing, and is it available on-site? Is it lumber? Steel?



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# WALLS, CEILINGS, AND FLOORING TRADES

## WALKING AND WORK SURFACES

### SAFETY TOOLBOX TALK

#### OVERVIEW

Trips, slips, and falls are among the top causes of fatalities and injuries among construction and general industry workers today.

- The conditions of your workplace, walking, and working surfaces play a huge role in workers' safety and ability to do their jobs efficiently and without hazards.
- Walking surfaces constantly change throughout the phases of your project. You must intentionally maintain safe conditions on your walking surfaces and always look for new hazards coming into your work area.
- **Protect yourself and your coworkers!**

#### LEARN AND APPLY THE FOLLOWING

##### Maintain Your Walking and Work Surfaces Safety

- **Always** start the day by completing a walk-through inspection of your work area to ensure there are no surface hazards. See **Figure 2**.  
Continue observing and clearing your work area throughout the day.
- Cover holes in floors as soon as they are found or created. Use a material that will withstand twice the intended load to be applied by a person, equipment, and material.
- Legibly label hole coverings. Often, a person picks up an unmarked hole covering material and walks into the hidden opening. See **Figure 1**.
- Clean up standing liquids and spills as soon as they occur or as they are spotted.
- Take your time, and do not rush on site. Pay attention to where you are walking and use handrails when traveling up or down stairs.
- When working near edges and exposed to a fall of 6 feet or more, always use guard rails and fall protection gear such as fall arrest equipment.
- Wear proper footwear with good tread to prevent slipping. Clean footwear often: remove mud, water, snow, grease, etc.
- When carrying heavy building materials, make sure that it will not prohibit you from seeing trip hazards from debris and surface hazards.

##### Scaffolding Surfaces Safety

- Always set up scaffolding according to the manufacturer's direction and have a competent person inspect the scaffolding before use.
- Scaffolding platforms must include safe access.
- Scaffolding platform surfaces must be filled in completely and have guardrails installed on all open edges and sides.

##### Maintaining Walking and Work Surfaces Safety

- Ensure your work area is free of trip hazards. Contain materials in one location. Keep the work zone area clear and uncluttered to avoid stepping over materials.
- Always clean up standing liquids in your work area.
- Hang electrical cords and hoses above workers' heads. Use cable management devices when cords and hoses are left on the walking surface.
- Designate an area where workers recycle package filling material, wood crates, and boxes from equipment or designate a collection area for recycling later.
- Remove combustible materials from the work area to their designated recycling containers or areas. See **Figure 2**.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What should you inspect, verify, or correct at the "start of the day"? See **Figure 2**.
2. What are some key takeaways for Walking and Work Surfaces Safety?
3. Are there General Contractor or Building Owner specific rules that apply to Finishes–Walls Ceiling Flooring Trade, Walking and Work Surfaces Safety above OSHA standards?

Figure 1 Label Hole Covering



Figure 2 Work Area Clutter



**Meeting Date:**  
**Supervisor:**  
**Employee Name:**
