

Window Openings: Protect Each Installation Stage

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Why this matters

Removing a temporary rail or an existing window changes the protection immediately. Plan how the opening stays controlled through removal, delivery, installation and handover—not just after the glass is fitted.

Objective: Verify opening protection and its handoff before changing a barrier or glazing unit.

Key hazards or failure points

Fall through an opening; unprotected receiving position; dropped glass or tools; false confidence in a screen or partly installed unit.

Practical controls

- Identify the opening, lower levels and actual working position. Have the responsible lead select protection for the task and access method; an insect screen or temporary sheet is not proof of fall protection.
- Plan protection before removing rails, covers or an existing unit. Provide the required replacement arrangement before exposure, and separate people on the other side and below from falling-material hazards.
- Keep glass handling, retention and worker protection coordinated. A pane resting in the frame does not release either the handling support or the temporary fall protection. Maintain controlled access until the required checks are complete.

Verify It in the Field

From a protected position, match opening identity, work platform and stage to the current plan. Check the installed barrier or personal system against its actual criteria; do not lean on an unknown frame to test it.

Walk through the change sequence verbally with the installer and receiving crew. Identify who maintains protection while materials pass, who restores it and who checks the result. Confirm protected positions before movement.

Record the source, actual finding, checker and time at removal and restoration. Where personal arrest is used, verify the actual attachment, clearance and prompt-rescue arrangements before exposure.

Stop and reassess

Hold for missing protection, changed platform height, unclear removal authority, unverified frame/glass retention or a person entering the area below. Keep access restricted, correct and recheck before resuming. Do not improvise an attachment to a window frame.

Ask the crew

1. What protects us while this opening changes?
2. Who verifies the receiving position and restoration?
3. What evidence permits removal of temporary protection?

Use the task plan and required specialist decisions before exposure.

Sources: OSHA 1926.500–.502; actual installation and protection plan.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/window-wall-opening-protection-handoff