

Department: Structural
Completed by: Bryan Cober, Manager, Structural Services
Approved by: Domenic Maniccia, Acting AVP Facilities Management
Date: August 8, 2013

Structural Safety Advisory: Walker Complex-Insufficient framing to support skylight bulkhead

Incident:

On May 27, 2013, a general contractor was working to close in a skylight in Walker Complex as part of recent roofing renovations. The plan was to cut 10” of drywall from the top of the bulkhead, close the top of the opening and remove the skylight in order to re-roof the opening. In a normal situation, the full bulkhead would have been framed, supported and clad with drywall to make a finished drywall assembly. This would have resulted with no issue in removing the 10” of drywall from the top of the assembly. As it turned out, the bulkhead had not been fully framed, and when two sides of the drywall unit were cut, the other two sides (left holding the entire weight of the bulkhead) failed and the bulkhead unit fell to the corridor floor. The other skylights in the Walker were inspected and reinforcing supports with four hangers were added to each existing skylight bulkhead before the roofing proceeded.

Important Points to Consider:

- Before any demolition takes place, “as-built drawings” of areas to be renovated should be studied by the project manager and the contractor to determine whether there are inherent construction or other issues. Onsite, assemblies are to be examined as they are uncovered to determine if the assembly has been built in accordance with the drawings and they have been assembled to industry standards.
- Head protection for workers is needed if there are overhead hazards.
- When re-roofing work is to be done, verify framing for any skylights for integrity.
- Any time that work is being completed overhead, or there is a chance that someone could come in contact with the work, the area should be barricaded and signed as OFFLIMITS to staff, faculty and the general public. See typical safety signage below.

