



Hotel cellar trapdoor openings

This safety Alert is issued to ensure that hotel owners and managers, as well as employers, are made aware of the potential of serious injury occurring when cellar "trapdoors" are left open in public areas.

Background

In a recent incident at the front of a hotel, a member of the public stepped backwards and fell through the opened trapdoor of a hotel cellar. The woman fell approximately 2.7 metres and landed on beer barrels. Her injuries were life threatening as result of the fall.

The same risk to safety is present when employees or other people need to access the hotel cellar through any similar opening, whether this is in the foot path on delivery/collection of beer barrels in the street or behind the bar or in the hotel.

Preventative measures

If you are a hotel employer, owner or person in control of the workplace where these trapdoors are present, you have a duty to prevent a similar incident occurring in your workplace.

All access points to a cellar that exposes anyone to the risk of falling, whether inside or outside the hotel building, must be made safe. The installation of barriers of suitable strength with self closing doors is a simple and effective method that could be introduced at high risk locations.

Legal requirements

Section 26 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act) requires people who have management or control of a workplace to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the means of entering and leaving are safe and without risk to health.

Sections 21 and 23 of the OHS Act require an employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that employees and people other than employees (such as the public) are not exposed to risks to their health and safety as a result of the operation of the business.



Example of a lockable barrier around a trapdoor in a public area.

Furthermore, the Occupational Health and Safety (Prevention of Falls) Regulations 2003 also require the employer to control the risk of a fall by either eliminating the risk or reducing the risk so far as is practicable.



Further information

Acts and Regulations

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Occupational Health and Safety (Prevention of Falls) Regulations 2003

Acts and regulations are available from Information Victoria on 1300 366 356 or order online at www.bookshop.vic.gov.au.

If you only want to view the legislation you can use the Parliament of Victoria web site; go to www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au, click on "Victorian Law Today" and scroll down to the "Search" window.

WorkSafe Victoria publications

[Plant \(Code of Practice No. 19, 1995\)](#)

[Falls Prevention](#) (Brochure)

[Managing Safety in Your Workplace](#) (Guide)

WorkSafe Victoria publications and guidance material can be viewed and downloaded from the WorkSafe Victoria web site; go to www.workcover.vic.gov.au

Hard copies are available by emailing WorkSafe publications at publications@workcover.vic.gov.au, by phoning 9641 1333 or by visiting your local WorkSafe Victoria office.

Other

Hotel / Motel Industry (Checklist. This safety assessment tool has been produced in association with Hotels and Motels & Accommodation Association of Victoria)

Small Business Safety Assessment Tool (Checklist. This safety assessment tool has been produced in association with Clubs Victoria Inc.)

- download the checklists from [small business](#) (accessed via <http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au> > worksafe industry > small business)

Note: This guidance material has been prepared using the best information available to WorkSafe Victoria. Any information about legislative obligations or responsibilities included in this material is only applicable to the circumstances described in the material. You should always check the legislation referred in this material and make your own judgement about what action you may need to ensure you have complied with the law. Accordingly, the Victorian WorkCover Authority extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information for your specific circumstances.