

## SAFETY ALERT

# Safe work around cellar door hatches in the hospitality industry

This safety alert reminds person conducting a business or undertaking's (PCBU's) Controllers of Premises where cellar trapdoors are used to access basement type cellars that controls must be implemented to prevent persons from falling into the open cellar door in a busy public area.

### Background

In an incident earlier this year, a worker fell approximately 2.5m to the floor of a cellar. The cellar trapdoor had been left unattended with no preventative controls in place. The worker received life changing injuries as a result of the fall and will not be able to return to any duties for a period of at least six months.

### Contributing factors

Preliminary findings by WorkCover NSW indicate there was a lack of safe systems of work for preventing falls into the cellar.

- The cellar door was left in the open position unattended.
- No system for warning others that the cellar door was open
- No physical barrier in place to prevent persons from falling into the cellar trapdoor opening.

### Action required

PCBU's whose workplace includes risks of falls from heights as well as PCBU's who are controllers of premises must eliminate the risk of falls from heights or if this is not reasonably practicable, control the risks of falls from heights.

### Possible solutions

- Use an above ground storage room rather than a cellar.
- Install stairs where possible.
- Install self closing barriers and/or permanent barriers around the cellar trap door.
- Installing built in guard around the cellar trap door.
- Regularly assess the safety of your work place environment.

### Further information

- *Managing the risk of falls at workplaces code of practice* (catalogue no. WC03566).
- Visit [workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://workcover.nsw.gov.au) or phone 13 10 50.

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