

**Stair-well and Open Wells
In School and Other Buildings Used by Youngsters**

A student fell six floors to death through the stairwell in a school building. The Coroner, when recording a death by accident at the death enquiry, recommended that staircases with open well should be avoided in new school buildings.

2. Authorized Persons (APs) are advised to take into consideration as far as practicable the Coroner's recommendation when designing new school buildings and other premises for use by children and youngsters. Where open wells or stair-wells are accessible to students or youngsters, APs should evaluate if undue hazard would be created through either proper or improper usage and provide additional safety measures, such as safety nets or higher railing, where appropriate.

Compliance with Regulations

3. APs are reminded that buildings with open stairwell should be provided with adequate protective measures. In addition to the provision of handrail satisfying paragraph 17.6 of the Code of Practice for the Provision of Means of Escape in Case of Fire 1996 and paragraph 8 of the Third Schedule of the Building (Planning) Regulations, APs should ensure that the height of the balustrade is not less than 1100mm as required by Building (Construction) Regulation 8.

4. Suitable protective barriers should also be provided to other locations where there is a difference in levels greater than 600 mm.

(C M LEUNG)
Building Authority

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