

Media Release

From the Building Commission

6 March 2013

Balcony collapse is a warning to check decks

Victorians are being warned to check their balconies and decks in the lead-up to the Easter long-weekend.

It comes after 10 people in Sydney were injured last week when their timber balcony collapsed during a family dinner. The group fell around six metres onto the concrete below with some of the family members needing to be hospitalised.

The Victorian Building Commissioner, Mr Greg Hyams, said his thoughts were with the affected family.

“This accident serves as a serious and timely reminder, as we look forward to a number of long weekends in the coming weeks, to make it a priority to check your decks and balconies. If they are not appropriately maintained, they have the potential to fail at any time,” said Mr Hyams.

“It’s a fact that materials can and will deteriorate, so it is vital to perform a general visual inspection on a yearly basis to identify any potential problems.

“If you have any concerns about the stability of a balcony or deck, avoid the area and contact a structural engineer, or another qualified building practitioner, to inspect it.”

The Building Commission is a Victorian Government statutory authority that oversees the state’s building control system to ensure the safety, liveability and sustainability of its built environment.

For more advice and assistance on maintaining your deck and balcony, contact the Building Commission on 1300 815 127, or visit the “balcony safety” page at buildingcommission.com.au

Checklist for decks and balconies:

Timber decks and balconies must be checked for signs of insect attack, decay, wet rot, compression or deformation. Areas to inspect include:

- Surfaces where water is pooling
- Locations where handrails attach
- Tops of solid balustrades
- Fixings at wall junctions
- Areas that cladding finishes hard against the balcony
- Bases of timber posts
- Brackets and bolts

For further information, contact:

Cameron Jackson, Building Commission. Telephone 9618 9298 or email cjackson@buildingcommission.com.au