

CFMEU SAFETY ALERT

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Another potential fatality

When are builders and contractors going to start managing risk instead of taking risks? We have had 3 Fatalities since July 2016 and except for sheer luck it could have been number 4.

Workers were manually lowering a roll of the main HV electrical cable down the electrical cable riser shaft from Level 25 of the BGC, BPI Westin Hotel Project. The cable consisted of 4 individual cables.

According to BGC, approximately 150m of cable had been lowered when the cable stands, which were located on Level 25 suddenly pulled from their mounting bolts under the increasing weight of the cable coming off the drum. As the cable stands gave way the cable free spooled striking and injuring a worker in the vicinity of the cable drum. The cable continued to free spool resulting in approximately 250m of cable free falling from Level 25 to basement 1.

The point the cable came to rest at was right next to a major thorough fare. There was no exclusion zone barricading, signage or spotters in place at basement 1 or on level 25. The weight of the cable free falling at speed down the riser into an unprotected, accessible thorough fare had the potential for fatal consequences.

There was no evidence available at the time, of an adequate risk assessment or planning being conducted prior to the task and engineering drawings could not be provided for the system being used. When questioned if BGC had reviewed the system of work the response was “we don't review all tasks, anyway we have hired a specialist contractor to do the job”.

The principle contractor has the ultimate responsibility to ensure safe systems of work on their projects.

Similar tasks are normally performed by mechanical, not manual means using a winch to pull cable up the riser.

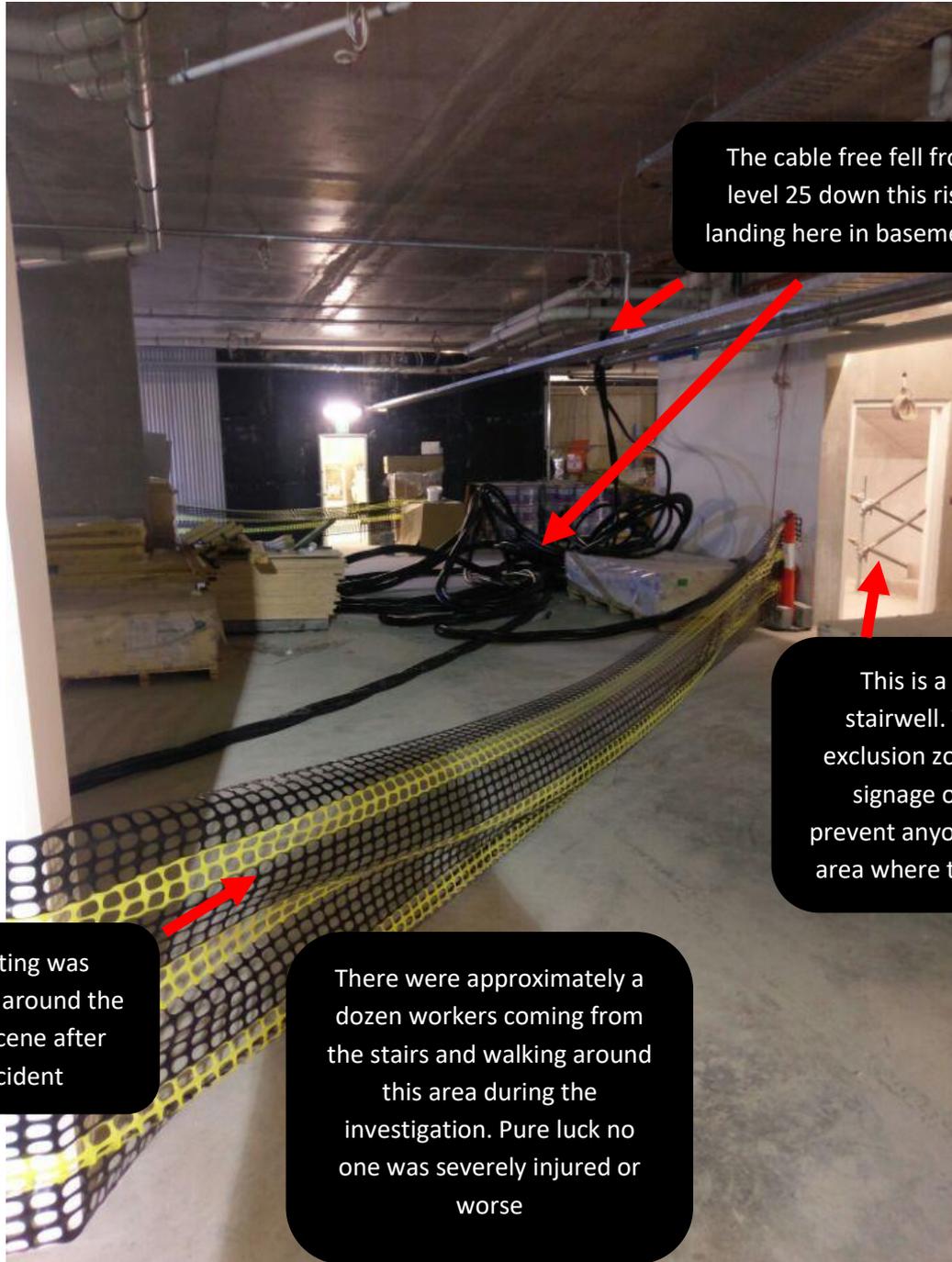
All builders and contractors have a responsibility to provide and maintain a safe work place and systems of work, this includes risk assessing all tasks and apply the hierarchy of controls to where possible, eliminate hazards but ultimately control hazards at the highest practicable level not the cheapest.

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The cable free fell from level 25 down this riser landing here in basement 1

This is a main access stairwell. There was no exclusion zone barricading, signage or spotters to prevent anyone accessing the area where the cable landed

This bunting was established around the incident scene after the incident

There were approximately a dozen workers coming from the stairs and walking around this area during the investigation. Pure luck no one was severely injured or worse

We all need to take action to halt the increasing fatality rate on Western Australian construction sites. The CFMEU asks that all projects conducting this type of work stop and review their systems of work.

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Authorised by Mick Buchan, State Secretary, CFMEU WA, 80 Beaufort St Perth