

**Preliminary Findings into the
November 15, 2009 Workplace Incident
at a Teslin Construction Site**

PURPOSE:

These initial findings are being released to provide information into the direct causes of this incident which resulted in serious injury to a pedestrian. It is hoped that providing this information will encourage others to review these causes and examine their own workplaces to ensure similar conditions either do not exist or, if they do, are immediately corrected.

INTRODUCTION:

On Sunday November 15, 2009, a pedestrian walked onto a construction site at Lot 12 Sawmill Road, Teslin, Yukon. The pedestrian stepped onto a tarp that was covering an unguarded excavation and fell, resulting in serious internal injuries.

The contractor on the site had started work without erecting a fence around the worksite as required under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. This allowed unrestricted access to the worksite and subsequent entry by a member of the public.

The contractor had excavations around the building foundation and was in the process of applying waterproofing. The excavations were covered with tarps to protect from the weather, but they were not provided with barriers or substantial covers to protect from inadvertent entry by workers or the general public.

DIRECT CAUSES:

Preliminary findings indicate that the direct causes of this incident was the existence of an unsafe workplace condition resulting from a lack of fencing around the worksite and the lack of barriers or substantial covers on excavations. The unsafe conditions allowed unrestricted access to a pedestrian unfamiliar with the worksite, who stepped onto an excavation cover that was unable to support the weight of a person.

The pedestrian fell through the excavation cover into the excavation and suffered serious internal injuries.

PREVENTION:

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board reminds all workplace parties to ensure that before construction, alteration, repair, dismantling or demolition of a building begins, a strongly constructed fence must be erected. They are further reminded that all open holes, excavations, cut outs or other openings through which a worker might fall must be either provided with

a substantial cover capable of withstanding any weight applied to it or barricaded to prevent inadvertent access.

Employers and workers are also reminded that, under Occupational Health and Safety regulations, they are required to protect not only workers but also any other persons who may be affected by the work.