

Window Falls Must Be Prevented

By Tom Reimer

Every year in Canada, children suffer serious injuries and, in some cases, lose their lives after falling from windows and balconies. These incidents are sudden, devastating, and often entirely preventable. A moment of curiosity, an open window, and a screen that fails to hold a child's weight can result in a tragedy that changes a family forever. While many people assume a standard window screen provides protection, screens are designed to keep insects out, not to prevent falls.

Young children are naturally curious and love exploring their surroundings. In apartments, condominiums, and multi-story homes, children often climb onto beds, chairs, dressers, or other furniture placed near windows. When they lean against a screen to look outside, the screen can easily give way. In a matter of seconds, a child can fall several stories to the ground.

The consequences can be catastrophic. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, there were 48 fall-related deaths among children aged 0 to 9 years in Canada between 2010 and 2023. Nearly half of those deaths involved children falling from, out of, or through buildings or structures.

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits among Canadian children aged 0 to 9 years. Between 2010 and 2023, falls accounted for an estimated 4,590 hospitalizations and 187,709 emergency department visits annually across Canada. Particularly concerning is the fact that falls from windows and balconies were identified as the types of falls most likely to result in hospital admission. The Public Health Agency of Canada notes that these incidents commonly involve children pushing through window screens, climbing on nearby furniture, standing on ledges, or accessing balcony railings.

These statistics highlight the urgent need for better window safety measures, particularly in apartment buildings where open windows are common during warmer months. Property managers, landlords, condominium corporations, and homeowners all share a responsibility to reduce these risks. Standard insect screens should never be considered fall-protection devices. Instead, approved window guards, window opening control devices, or properly engineered security screens should be installed to prevent children from falling while still allowing emergency escape when required.

Parents should also move furniture away from windows, keep windows secured when young children are present, and regularly inspect safety devices to ensure they remain effective. Even brief lapses in supervision can be enough time for a curious child to gain access to an unprotected window. No family should have to endure the grief of losing a child because a window screen failed. Window guards and security screens provide a simple, effective barrier between children and a potentially fatal fall. The cost of prevention is small compared to the lifelong consequences of a preventable tragedy. By making window safety a priority in every apartment and multi-story residence, lives can be protected and heartbreaking accidents can be avoided.

Sources: Public Health Agency of Canada, Injuries Related to Children's Falls in Canada (2010-2023). Reported 48 fall-related deaths among children aged 0-9, with nearly half involving falls from buildings or structures. [health-inf....canada.ca], [health-inf....canada.ca]

Public Health Agency of Canada, Spotlight on Children's Falls, 2025 Edition. Reported an average of 4,590 fall-related hospitalizations and 187,709 emergency department visits annually among children aged 0-9. [health-inf....canada.ca], [health-inf....canada.ca]

Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP).

Found that falls from windows and balconies were among the fall types most likely to result in hospital admission and commonly involved children pushing through window screens



What if the Nvidia CEO scandal happened in Ontario?

By Tahir Khorasanee, LL.M.
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Jensen Huang, the co-founder and longtime CEO of NVIDIA, resigned as President, CEO and director on November 12. NVIDIA has appointed CFO Colette Kress as interim CEO while it searches for a permanent replacement.

The headlines have focused heavily on the allegations involving Huang's personal life. But from an Ontario employment-law perspective, one reported allegation would be particularly significant: that he had an intimate relationship with another NVIDIA executive who reported to him. Reuters and AP have reported that allegation.

If comparable facts arose in Ontario, my view is that the CEO would also have to resign.

Why?

This is not simply about an employer policing somebody's private life. Consensual workplace relationships are not automatically unlawful in Ontario.

The problem changes dramatically when the relationship involves the most powerful person in the organization and someone who reports to him.

At that point, you have legitimate questions about power, consent, conflicts of interest, preferential treatment, compensation, promotion and whether the subordinate could realistically say no without fearing consequences for their career.

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act imposes specific obligations on employers concerning workplace harassment and workplace sexual harassment. When an employer becomes aware of an incident or complaint of workplace harassment, it must ensure that an investigation appropriate in the circumstances is conducted. Ontario's own guidance says that investigation should be prompt, objective, confidential and thorough.

And when the allegation concerns the CEO, the practical problem becomes obvious:

Who investigates the person at the very top?

Ontario's guidance specifically says that the investigator should not be involved in the incident or under the direct control of the alleged harasser. In a CEO case, that will often point toward board oversight and an independent external investigation rather than an ordinary HR process.

Importantly, this does not mean that an allegation automatically proves harassment, nor does an affair automatically establish just cause for dismissal. Those are different legal questions and would depend on the evidence, the employment agreement, the executive's duties and the circumstances.

But a CEO occupies a fundamentally different position from an ordinary employee. Where credible allegations concern a relationship with someone within the CEO's reporting structure, the issue is no longer purely private. It can directly engage the company's ability to investigate impartially, maintain confidence in its leadership and protect employees from conflicts created by an extreme imbalance of workplace power.

That is why, if the circumstances reported at NVIDIA happened at an Ontario company, I would expect the same ultimate result: the CEO would have to step aside and, depending on the investigation and surrounding circumstances, resign.

The lesson for Ontario employers is straightforward:

A workplace relationship may be personal. A relationship involving the CEO and a subordinate is also a governance and employment-law issue.

And when you are the person at the very top, there may simply be no workable way to separate the two.



THE Mr. X Files

By John Mutton

CENTRAL EXCLUSIVE

Karmageddon

Democracy Ends Where the Bureaucracy Begins

By Mr. 'X' ~ John Mutton, Former Mayor of Clarington

There's an old saying that you can't fight City Hall.

Having spent a good portion of my life inside City Hall, I can tell you something even more interesting.

Sometimes City Hall fights itself.

And more often than the public realizes, the battle isn't between politicians. It's between the people elected to make decisions and the people employed to carry them out. Now, before every municipal employee in Ontario starts sharpening their pencils to write me an angry letter, let me make something clear. Municipalities are filled with extraordinarily talented, dedicated public servants. I've worked with many of them. People who genuinely care about their communities, work ridiculous hours, and could probably earn considerably more money somewhere else.

They're not the problem.

The problem begins when the people hired to advise elected officials start believing they're the ones who should be making the decisions. I have a favourite saying from my years in municipal government: "Sometimes the staff are reading the organization chart upside down. It's the Mayor and Council, then staff. Not the other way around." You would be amazed how often that simple concept needs explaining. Think about it.

Every four years, residents line up at polling stations, cast their ballots, and elect a mayor and council to represent them. They don't vote for the Chief Administrative Officer. They don't vote for the planning director. They don't vote for the municipal solicitor. And they certainly don't vote for the bureaucratic philosophy that sometimes seems to govern every decision coming out of municipal headquarters. Yet somewhere between election night and the first council meeting, a strange transformation can occur. The politicians arrive believing they've been elected to change things. The bureaucracy greets them with a smile, a briefing binder approximately the size of the Toronto telephone directory, and a detailed explanation of why almost everything they promised during the election is apparently impossible.

Welcome to municipal government.

Where campaign promises go to meet the policy manual. Now, don't misunderstand me. Staff have an obligation to tell council when something is illegal, financially irresponsible, technically impossible, or simply a terrible idea. That's their job. But there's an enormous difference between telling council that something cannot legally be done and telling council that something shouldn't be done because it makes the administration uncomfortable.

One is professional advice.

The other can become bureaucratic obstruction. And after spending years around municipal government, I can tell you that the distinction matters. I've always believed that good municipal staff should present elected officials with options. Not just the option the administration prefers. Not just the option that creates the least amount of work.

And certainly not the option that preserves the sacred principle of we've always done it this way.

If council wants to accomplish something, the first question from administration should be, "How can we lawfully make that happen?" Not, "How quickly can we explain why it can't?" There is another problem that rarely gets discussed publicly.

Information is power. And in municipal government, staff often control the information.

They prepare the reports. They commission the studies. They frame the recommendations. They decide which alternatives receive detailed analysis and which ones barely get a passing mention. By the time a report reaches the council table, the direction of the debate can already have been substantially influenced. That's not necessarily sinister. Often it's simply how large organizations function. But it becomes a problem when elected representatives stop asking questions and start treating staff recommendations as though they arrived on stone tablets from Mount Sinai. A staff recommendation is exactly that. A recommendation.

It is not a commandment.

Councillors are entitled to disagree with it. They're entitled to request alternatives. They're entitled to challenge assumptions and ask whether the same objective can be achieved more efficiently. In fact, I'd argue that's precisely what they were elected to do.

Otherwise, why bother holding elections?

We could simply appoint a Chief Administrative Officer, give everyone a comfortable chair, and cancel the democratic inconvenience of having elected representatives ask difficult questions.

Think of the savings on council chamber microphones alone. Of course, there's a responsibility on the other side of the table as well. Mayors and councillors need to understand their own authority, do their homework, read the reports, and have the courage to make decisions. You cannot complain about bureaucratic control if you routinely surrender your responsibility to exercise democratic oversight. And no, being elected doesn't give a mayor or councillor the right to personally direct every municipal employee. There are laws, delegated authorities, professional obligations, and proper administrative reporting relationships for good reason. But those safeguards should support democratic accountability, not replace it.

Council establishes policy, sets priorities, approves budgets, and holds the administration accountable through the appropriate channels. Staff provide expertise, administer programs, implement lawful council decisions, and advise elected officials honestly. That's how the relationship is supposed to work.

Somewhere along the way, however, certain municipal administrations seem to have developed the impression that elected councils are merely temporary visitors. The staff will still be there after the next election, after all. The politicians come and go. The bureaucracy remains. And that institutional permanence can create a very interesting attitude toward change.

Particularly when a newly elected mayor arrives with ideas that don't fit neatly into the existing filing cabinets. But here's the part I find most troubling. When residents become frustrated with municipal decisions, who do they blame?

The mayor. The councillors. The people whose names appeared on the ballot. And rightly so. Elected officials are accountable to the public. But accountability without meaningful control is a recipe for dysfunction.

You cannot reasonably expect elected representatives to answer for decisions if they're unwilling or unable to challenge the administrative recommendations shaping those decisions.

That is why strong councils matter. Not councils that bully staff. Not councils that interfere with individual employees. And certainly not councils that ignore professional advice simply because it is inconvenient. I'm talking about councils that understand the difference between respecting expertise and surrendering authority. There's a very big difference. As municipalities begin new terms of council, I hope elected representatives across Ontario remember something fundamental. The residents didn't elect you to become the administration's public relations department.

They elected you to lead. To question. To set direction. And, when necessary, to say no. Because at the end of the day, municipal government belongs to the people who pay for it. Not the people who administer it. And if anyone at City Hall is still confused about that, perhaps it's time to take the organization chart off the wall, turn it right side up, and have another look. After all, democracy is supposed to run from the people to their elected representatives — not from the bureaucracy down to the people.