



UNITED STATES
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
4330 EAST WEST HIGHWAY
BETHESDA, MD 20814

ACTING CHAIRMAN ROBERT ADLER

July 20, 2021

Vacation Rental Platforms, Agencies, and Websites

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to urge you to act immediately to protect consumers—especially young children—from the dangers posed by residential elevators in the homes for rent through your platform or agency. Residential elevators can pose a deadly but unforeseen hazard to children, particularly children who are encountering them in vacation or rental homes.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent regulatory agency responsible for protecting consumers from unreasonable risks of injury and death from consumer products. CPSC has jurisdiction over residential elevators, and the agency has engaged with the manufacturers and sellers of these units regarding their legal responsibilities. I reach out to you, not as a regulator, but in the hopes that you will join us in ensuring that children are safe in rentals on your platform.

Residential elevators pose a hidden and deadly hazard: small children can be crushed to death in a deadly gap that may exist between the doors. If the gap is too deep between any exterior (*i.e.*, hoistway) door and the farthest point of the inner door (which is often an accordion door), a child can enter and close the hoistway door without opening the interior car door, and become entrapped between the two doors, resulting in serious injuries or death when the elevator car moves. Children, some as young as two and as old as 12, have been crushed to death in this gap, suffering multiple skull fractures, fractured vertebrae and traumatic asphyxia. Other children have suffered horrific and lifelong injuries. Last week, a 7-year-old child was reported to have been tragically killed in a vacation home elevator.

This hazard can be addressed by having a qualified elevator inspector examine the home elevator for this dangerous gap and other potential safety hazards, inspecting to the latest ASME A17.1, Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators. Dangerous gaps can be made safer by placing space guards on the back of the hoistway door or installing an electronic monitoring device that deactivates the elevator when a child is detected in the gap. These fixes are relatively inexpensive and can save lives.

You are in the unique position to have direct contact information for both owners and renters of vacation homes. I urge you to take the following steps to protect consumers who are—even now—beginning to enjoy their summer vacation homes without knowledge of this extreme hazard:

- Immediately notify all renters who use your platform of this potential hazard via email or in a warning box on their reservation or booking pages.
- Immediately require all members or “hosts” using your platform to lock out access doors or otherwise disable the elevators in their properties *unless and until those members provide proof of an inspection to certify that no hazardous gap exists*; and
- Make such an inspection a requirement of anyone posting a listing on your platform going forward.

CPSC will continue to work with elevator manufacturers to ensure that their products are safe for consumers, but the agency needs your help to reach the owners and renters of properties with the potential hazard. By working together, we can stop these agonizing deaths and prevent further harm to children and families. If you have any questions, or if we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert S. Adler". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light gray, rounded rectangular box.

Robert S. Adler
Acting Chair