

More glass falls from balconies

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Omar Jabri says he had been living in the posh condo above the TIFF Bell Lightbox only a month when he received a shocking call at work that a glass pane had crashed down from his 16th-floor balcony onto a terrace below.

CHLOÉ FEDIO/TORONTO STAR

Chloé Fedio Staff Reporter

Omar Jabri had been living in the posh condo above the TIFF Bell Lightbox for only a month when he received a shocking call at work that a glass pane had crashed from his 16th-floor balcony facing King St.

The glass presumably fell on the building's podium below his condo. The missing panel was fixed within two days and he brushed off the May incident as a freak accident — until Tuesday evening.

Standing on the corner of King and John Sts., Jabri saw shards of glass crash down from a 27th-floor balcony — this time onto the street.

“It just shattered — little pieces of glass all over the place. People scattered. It was quite alarming to see the glass fall on the street,” Jabri said. “What concerns me the most is that because it’s happened more than one time, it’s probably a design flaw.”

John St. is still blocked off with police tape between King and Adelaide Sts., and the street won’t reopen until scaffolding is put in place to protect passersby on the sidewalk below.

Developers of the 42-storey Festival Tower are warning residents to stay off their balconies until they figure out if there’s a defect.

“We’re very concerned about the whole building and until we determine what the issue is, it’s very hard for us to know how to fix it,” said Tom Dutton, senior vice-president at Daniels Corp. “We’re telling people, advising them, to only use their balconies if they have to — and if they do go out on their balconies just to stay away from the edge.”

Dutton said he has only heard of two incidents of falling glass at Festival Tower — both on the northeast side of the building that faces John St. The first incident, he said, happened three weeks ago, when the tempered glass expanded in the heat and busted through the metal railing.

He said every single balcony in the highrise has since been inspected, and that some panes were “adjusted.”

The latest incident is still being investigated, he said.

“They’re trying to determine what the cause was — whether it’s some sort of defect in the glass or maybe there was an impact that caused it to break that we’re not aware of. We don’t know at this stage,” Dutton said.

Falling glass has been a problem at another downtown highrise near Bay and College Sts. At least eight partitions have fallen from 37 Grosvenor St. on four separate days since December. At least two panes of glass exploded on the upper balconies of that highrise on Monday. The city has ordered that access to all balconies in that building be restricted.

City building inspectors continue to investigate the cause of the shattered glass in all cases.

No one has been injured, but businesses on King St. across from Festival Tower worry it’s just a matter of time.

“Not one has been hurt yet — but I wouldn’t be surprised if a shard of glass falls and cuts somebody one day,” said Nancy Meek, an administrator at Le Saint Tropez restaurant.

“The builders — they have to start taking responsibility,” said Lebert Williams, manager of Dazzling restaurant.

N’awlins owner Korry Picco said fears that Festival Tower is dangerous are hurting business.

“We all benefit from people sitting out on our patios in the summer time, and in the middle of summer now we have scares that glass will be falling on our customers. The sooner they can rectify the problem, the better,” Picco said.

With files from Liam Casey



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