

Building contractor and director fined after fire risk failings

A building contractor has been fined £600,000 and its director has been ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid work and fined £4,200 following serious and repeated failings in managing the risk of fire during work at a construction site.

In January 2018 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) undertook a proactive inspection to investigate health and safety failings by S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited at a construction site at Regent House, Brentwood, Essex after a concern was raised that people were sleeping on site.

The subsequent HSE investigation, which was assisted by Essex Fire & Rescue Service, identified failings in fire management at the site which created risks to workers and members of the public who were visiting show flats outside of business hours.

The environment at Regent House was poorly managed and the construction work was being carried out in an unsafe manner which could have resulted in a fire.

S&S Quality Building Contractors had previously been subject to HSE interventions after risks of a fire had been identified across a number of sites over several years. Evidence gathered during the proactive HSE investigation indicated that the company director Shlomo Pines regularly attended the Regent House site and failed to implement improvements from previous HSE interventions.

S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited of Hawthorn Business Park, Granville Road, London, pleaded guilty to breaching 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £600,000 and ordered to pay costs of £36,894 at Basildon Crown Court on 25 October 2022.

Company director Shlomo Pines, of St. Johns Road, Golders Green, London pleaded guilty to contravening Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He received a community order to complete 100 hours of unpaid work and was fined £4,200.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Prentiss Clarke-Jones said: "S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited completely ignored the importance of fire safety measures on a construction site led by a director who wilfully chose to ignore the risks despite evidence he knew how to make things safe. This unsurprisingly resulted in a site where risks were also ignored by his workers.

"Follow the guidance, get competent advice and take responsibility that the law requires at the very least, or someone may get hurt, which thankfully did not eventuate here."

Notes to editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. hse.gov.uk^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Read more about Fire Safety in Construction: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg168.htm>