

Company and director sentenced after work left seriously injured

A Swindon-based scaffolding company and its director have been sentenced after a worker was left with life-changing injuries.

Swindon Magistrates' Court heard how the worker was erecting scaffolding on 19 December 2016 when the structure came into contact with 33KV overhead power lines. The father of five received an electric shock which led to the amputation of his left arm above the elbow, right arm below the elbow and both of his feet. The 32-year-old also suffered severe burns to his legs and back, damage to his vocal chords, and was in an induced coma for six weeks.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the scaffolding should not have been built to that height so close to overhead power lines. The company and its director failed to ensure a safe system of work was in place for erecting a scaffold under overhead power lines.

Boundary Scaffolding Limited, of Unit 10 Kendrick Industrial Estate Swindon SN2 2DU, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £80,000 and has been ordered to pay full costs of £1415.10.

Company director Jonathon Lee Griffiths-Clack, of 12 Grosmont Drive, Swindon, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 as well as Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended for 12 months. He has been ordered to repay costs of £1545.30.

In a statement the injured man Jamie Mines said: "I can't quite put into words how it feels to wake up with no hands. I had five-month-old twin girls at the time of the accident, all I could think of when I woke up was the things I wouldn't be able to do, for example I wouldn't be able to hold my babies' hands again, I wouldn't be able to draw, play catch or teach my girls any of the things that I had learned with my hands.

"There's so many things I can't do it's hard to imagine, but to never feel anything with my hands again is what I struggle with the most.

"Sitting here now in my wheelchair nine months after the accident and I still don't walk, for a man who was very active before the accident it has been extremely difficult! I was a keen sportsman as well as someone who enjoyed his job and was really hands on with my babies. How my life has changed is almost indescribable."

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Ian Whittles said: "This incident could have been prevented had the company and its director properly planned a safe system of work and ensured the scaffolding was erected in line with HSE regulations. Due to their failings, a young father of five has been left with

life-changing injuries and the lives of an entire family have been changed forever.”

Further safety in construction guidance can be found here:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/overhead.htm>

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. It helps Great Britain work well by applying a broad range of regulatory interventions and scientific expertise, to prevent 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
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:
legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.