

# Company fined after roofer fell through unguarded loft hatch

- Mark Smith fell through loft hatch while re-roofing house in Wimbledon.
- The roofer fractured his back and has been unable to return to work.
- Falls from height remain a leading cause of death and injury.

A Hampshire-based company has been fined after a roofer suffered life-changing injuries when he fell through an unprotected loft hatch while carrying out work on a domestic property in Wimbledon.

Mark Smith had been working for Willow Services (Southern) Limited on 13 May 2024, where he was re-roofing the house. The 41-year-old had been stripping out internal insulation within the roof space, when he stepped onto an unguarded loft hatch which had not been identified or protected.



The unguarded loft hatch

He fell approximately 11 feet to the floor below, landing on his back. He had fractured his L1 vertebra and his hip and has been unable to return to work since. His employment was later terminated by the company.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had failed to suitably plan the work at height. The company did not ensure adequate measures were in place to prevent falls and had failed to provide competent supervision of the work.



The work had not been properly planned

The investigation also identified that those overseeing the work did not have the necessary training or experience to safely manage construction-related activities.

HSE guidance provides practical advice on planning, organising and carrying out roof work safely. It highlights the need to properly assess risks from working at height, identify fragile surfaces, provide suitable access equipment, and ensure falls are prevented wherever possible.

The guidance also stresses the importance of competence and supervision and applies to construction, maintenance, repair, cleaning and demolition activities. Following this guidance can help reduce the risk of fatal and serious injuries when working on roofs. [Work at height – HSE](#).



Falls from height are the leading cause of injury and death in construction

Willow Services (Southern) Ltd, of Westbrooke Close, Waterlooville, Hampshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £5,607 in

costs at Westminster Magistrates' Court on 30 April 2026.

**HSE Inspector Laurence Goodacre said:**

"Falls from height remain the leading cause of fatal incidents in the workplace, particularly within the construction industry.

"This incident was entirely avoidable and resulted from a failure to properly plan the work and provide competent supervision.

"Had the loft hatch been identified and protected at the planning stage, Mr Smith would not have suffered these life-changing injuries."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Neenu Bains and paralegal officer Atiya Khan

**Further information:**

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Relevant guidance can be found here – [Work at height – HSE](#).
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).