

Company fined after worker suffers fractured spine

A construction company has been sentenced after a worker was injured while demolishing a farm building.

South Tyneside Magistrates' Court heard how, on 20 September 2017, an employee of Northern Structures Ltd was removing roof sheets from a timber frame farm building when he fell approximately 4 metres through one of the asbestos cement roof sheets onto the ground below, suffering a fractured spine.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that, while a risk assessment and method statement were in place to remove the roof sheets from below, this method was then changed to remove them from above. It was during this process that the employee fell through a roof sheet.

Northern Structures Ltd of Amble Industrial Estate, Amble, Northumberland pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1)(a) and Regulation 4(1)(c) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £150,000 with £791.70 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Loren Wilmot said:

"Suitable and sufficient measures should have been in place through the use of alternative access equipment.

"This would have negated the need for the employee to be on the roof of the building, therefore eliminating the risk of a fall from height through the roof sheets."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. 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.