

Construction client sentenced after worker found dead on site

- HSE inspectors called in after man's body found on site.
- Multiple failings found at site risking workers to falls from height.
- HSE guidance is available.

A construction client has been handed a suspended prison sentence after a worker was found dead on a building site in London.

Moses Meisels received a 12-week prison sentence, suspended for one year, and was ordered to pay £10,000 in costs City of London Magistrates Court due to his role in the incident.

The Metropolitan Police discovered the man's body at the site of a synagogue development at Upper Clapton Road, in Hackney, in December 2018.

Although the worker had died as a result of natural causes, subsequent inspections by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed multiple life-threatening safety failures at the site.

Moses Meisels was overseeing major structural work to enlarge the synagogue, but he repeatedly ignored warnings about dangerous practices – putting construction workers at serious risk of fatal falls.

Following the discovery of the man's body, HSE inspectors conducted four separate visits in a five-month period, where they uncovered a catalogue of serious failures including:

- Workers operating on the roof beyond the protection of scaffolding edge barriers
- Large, unprotected holes in the ground floor creating fall risks into the basement below
- A single unsecured ladder as the only access to the first floor, which didn't extend far enough to provide a safe handhold
- Construction waste dangerously stacked in the front garden

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 Regulation 2 defines a client as "any person for whom a project is carried out". HSE guidance states that commercial clients have a crucial influence over how projects are run, including the management of health and safety risks. Commercial clients must make suitable arrangements for managing their project, enabling those carrying it out to manage health and safety risks in a proportionate way.

At City of London Magistrates Court, Meisels of Gilda Crescent, Stoke Newington, pleaded guilty to breaching Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. He received a 12-week prison sentence, suspended for one year, and was ordered to pay £10,000 in costs.

HSE inspector David King said: “It is essential that clients must make suitable arrangements for managing a project, including the allocation of sufficient time and other resources.

“Clients should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action them if fail to ensure their construction projects meet the required standards.”

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 [Commercial clients: roles and responsibilities – 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](#).