

Construction company fined £120,000 after worker dies in fall from height

- 59-year-old father of two was killed when he fell from first floor
- The work had not been properly planned or measures put in place
- Falls from height remain leading cause of fatalities in construction industry

An Oxfordshire-based construction company has been fined £120,000 after a carpenter died when he fell through an unsafe first floor while carrying out refurbishment work.

W G Carter Limited, of Appleton, was sentenced following the death of 59-year-old Richard “Felix” Roper, who fell from height while working at a domestic property in Gloucestershire.

Mr Roper, a father of two, had been carrying out work on the first floor of Manor Barn House, Nether Westcote, on 30 August 2022, where extensive repairs were being undertaken to replace rotten floor joists and floorboards.



Mr Roper fell through the unsafe first floor while carrying out refurbishment work

He had been tasked with replacing damaged floor joists while other workers removed sections of flooring in the same area. Large parts of the first-floor structure had been stripped back, leaving open gaps between joists. In addition, some joists were either missing altogether or had not been secured.

It was while working in these conditions, Mr Roper fell from the first floor to the concrete ground floor below. He sustained severe head injuries and died in hospital the following day.

A joint investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Gloucestershire Police found that the work at height had not been properly planned, appropriately supervised, or carried out safely.

The investigation identified several serious failings. Workers, including Mr Roper, were able to access areas of the first floor where flooring and structural supports had been removed, despite there being insufficient

measures in place to prevent falls. At the same time, other workers were continuing to remove floorboards, creating and increasing the risk of falling from height.



After falling from the first floor he landed on the concrete floor below

Following the incident, HSE served a Prohibition Notice, stopping further work at height until adequate safety measures had been introduced.

Falls from height remain the leading cause of workplace death and injury with the latest statistics from HSE showing that they account for over a quarter of all [work related deaths in 2025/26](#).

HSE guidance states what an employer must do to protect their employees from [falls from height](#) including making sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people.

The investigation found that W G Carter Limited had failed to adequately plan the work and implement suitable measures to prevent workers from falling. After the incident, the company adopted a safer method of working, installing floor joists from below using appropriate work-at-height equipment and preventing access to the first floor while the work was being undertaken.

On 24 September 2026, at Bristol Magistrates Court, W G Carter Limited, of 81A Eaton Road, Appleton, Oxfordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £120,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,247.

HSE principal inspector James Lucas said:

“Due to the failings of this company, a man lost his life.

“Every year, workers are killed or suffer life-changing injuries because work at height has not been properly planned or suitable safeguards have not been put in place.

“Had appropriate controls been in place, Felix’s death could have been

prevented.”

“Our thoughts remain with Felix’s family. He was a valued colleague and a much-loved father of two who lost his life in circumstances that should never have arisen.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski, enforcement advocate Rowena Goodwin and paralegal officer Hannah Snelling.

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. 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](#).