

Construction company fined £33,500 after man dies following fall from height

- Worker died after falling through unprotected skylight opening at domestic property.
- Company failed to take measures to prevent falls from height.
- HSE reminds employers of guidance for safe working at height.

Skyladder Construction Limited has been fined £33,500 after a man died when he fell through a skylight opening at a domestic property.

The company was constructing a single-storey extension with a flat roof at a property in Farnborough. On the evening of 20 July 2022, it began to rain, and the company director and an employee returned to the site at approximately 11pm to cover the new roof with a blue plastic tarpaulin, securing it with logs of wood.

Bhakta Rai accompanied the employee to the site that evening. At some point, Mr Rai went onto the roof to assist and fell through a hole intended for a skylight, falling approximately 2.5 metres onto the concrete floor below.

In an attempt to recover Mr Rai, he was lifted back through the roof opening, carried across the roof, and then brought down a ladder at the front of the property. No ambulance was called, and Mr Rai was transported to hospital in a van. He died a few days later after sustaining significant injuries, including a spinal fracture, fractured skull, possible bleed on the brain, and swelling to the head.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) attended the scene on 21 July 2022. Between the police leaving the site (at around 4am) and the HSE's arrival later that day, the tarpaulin had been replaced, covering the roof.



Tarp following the fall when police attended

An HSE investigation found that Skyladder Construction Limited failed to take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent, so far as was reasonably practicable, any person from falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. There were no physical measures in place at the edges of the building or around the skylight openings to prevent a fall, and no measures to mitigate the distance or impact of a fall.



Tarp covering roof/hole when HSE attended

Skyladder Construction Limited also contravened a requirement imposed by an HSE inspector. During the investigation, HSE requested information from the company under Section 20 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which it is an offence not to provide. No response was received.

HSE guidance sets out measures for planning and carrying out work at height safely. It includes practical controls that can be implemented to remove or reduce the risk of a fall. Following this guidance would have identified the risks from the unprotected roof and shown that the risk could have been eliminated entirely by changing how the work was undertaken. Further guidance can be found here: [Work at height – HSE](#).

Skyladder Construction Limited, of 8 Harbour Close, Farnborough, GU14 8HT, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and Section 33(1)(e) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 for failing to provide information requested under Section 20 of the Act.

The company was fined £33,500, ordered to pay £8,472 in costs, and a £2,000 victim surcharge at Basingstoke Magistrates' Court on 31 October 2025.

Following the hearing, HSE Inspector Jenny Morris said:

"Falls when working at height remain the most common kind of workplace fatality, accounting for around a quarter of all worker deaths. In this case, this was a wholly avoidable incident – Mr Rai died in a fall which should never have been able to happen."

This prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Rebecca Schwartz and Paralegal Officer Helen Hugo.

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](#)
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>
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](#).