

Construction company fined after Shropshire bricklayer fractures skull

A construction company has been fined £12,000 after a Shropshire bricklayer fell through a stairwell opening and fractured his skull.

Scott Ife, 30, from Bridgnorth, was working for 2 Counties Construction (Midlands) Ltd when the incident took place on 8 June 2020. The company had been hired as the principal contractor overseeing the refurbishment of agricultural barns into houses on Humber Lane in Telford.



Scott Ife fell through an unprotected stairwell opening from the first floor of the renovation project

Working alongside another employee, Mr Ife, who was 27 at the time, was laying the blocks to form the gable walls for a two-storey extension. The pair set up a working platform using Youngman boards on the first floor of the property. As there was an unprotected stairwell opening in the property, one end of the Youngman boards was unsupported.

While leaning over to point up the blocks in the gable walls, the worker lost his balance before falling onto the unsupported Youngman boards and through the stairwell opening.

He fell four-and-a-half metres onto the concrete floor below, fracturing his skull and damaging his facial nerve. The man was hospitalised for three days following the incident.



The stairwell void below the first floor of the property

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) identified a series of failings on the part of 2 Counties Construction (Midlands) Ltd including a lack of suitable controls for preventing falls into the building and through the stairwell openings. There was also inadequate planning, a lack of selection of equipment for working at height and inadequate site management arrangements.

HSE guidance can be found at: [Work at height – HSE](#)

2 Counties Construction (Midlands) Ltd, of Taylors Lane, Broomhall, Worcester, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £12,000 and ordered to pay £4,139 in costs at Cannock Magistrates' Court on 21 July 2023.

HSE inspector David Brassington said, "This incident could and should have been easily avoided. Work at height needs to be properly planned and managed to ensure that appropriate precautions are used.

"We are fortunate that the injuries resulting from these failings were not more serious."

This prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Nathan Cook.

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.
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. Guidance on [working at height](#) is available.