

Garage door installer fined for asbestos safety failings

A garage door installation company has been fined after failing to manage asbestos safely during work on a house in Bamber Bridge.

Preston Magistrates' Court heard how on 9 October 2019, two employees of Garage Doors (Northern) Ltd, were carrying out work to remove an existing integrated garage door and fit a new door at a property in Browndedge Lane, Bamber Bridge.

The workers removed old fittings from the side of the garage door with an angle grinder and some of the ceiling fittings with a crowbar. Holes were drilled into the ceiling to fit new roof bars and in doing so they caused damage to the ceiling, which was made of Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB).

The resulting dust containing asbestos fibres was spread through the house via the central heating system, resulting in the homeowner having to leave his home, and live in an hotel for eleven months, whilst the house was deep cleaned to remove all traces of asbestos fibres.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that despite undertaking work on a building built before 2000, a suitable and sufficient assessment to establish whether asbestos was liable to be present in the premises, and what type of asbestos containing material may have been present, was not carried out prior to the start of the job. Subsequent testing of the material came back positive for Chrysotile and Amosite.

Garage Doors (Northern) Limited of Aspden Street, Bamber Bridge, Preston pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6 (1) of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,589.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Stuart Hadfield said: "Exposure to asbestos is a serious health issue and without companies fully assessing the risk when carrying out intrusive work they are potentially putting their workers and members of the public at risk.

"This incident could so easily have been avoided by identifying the presence of asbestos and putting in place the correct control measures and safe working practices to prevent the release of, and exposure to, asbestos.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:
www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. More information regarding asbestos health and safety can be found at
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/>
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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