

Two companies fined half a million pounds after worker left paralysed

Two companies have been fined more than half a million pounds after a site worker lost the use of his legs following an incident in London.

Westminster Magistrates' Court heard how, on 5 November 2015, Mr Marcel Păduraru, a Romanian construction worker, fell onto and then through a fragile plastic skylight into a basement over three metres below. He suffered a severed spine and will not regain the use of his legs. He was 30 years old at the time of the incident.

Grangewood Builders Limited had been appointed as the principal contractor to carry out a £5,000,000 refurbishment at a large house near Buckingham Palace on Chapel Road, London. Grangewood had engaged Trenchco Limited to carry out specialised demolition work at the site.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that, despite work being carried out directly by the site skylight, neither company checked if it was fragile or took action to stop people falling through it.

Neither company ensured the work was adequately planned and, as a result, safe systems of work were not identified and implemented. Workers had been put at risk from construction activities at the site ranging from demolishing a roof without edge protection to manually handling wood beams weighing an estimated 200kg.

The investigation also found that the Trenchco supervisor directly controlling the work had no formal training relating to supervision and some of the workers, including the Romanian victim, had to rely on unofficial interpreters to pass on instructions and tell them what the health and safety records contained.

Grangewood Builders Limited of Lionel Road, Canvey Island, Essex pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and was fined £270,000 and ordered to pay £7,025.98 in costs.

Trenchco Limited of Clewer Crescent, Harrow Weald, Middlesex pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 15(2) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and was fined £270,000 and ordered to pay £7,025.98 in costs.

HSE inspector Andrew Verrall-Withers commented after the hearing: "The risks relating to fragile skylights being fallen through and the simple solutions to avoid this are well known. The failings at the site were not limited to the unprotected plastic skylight. Other activities such as the demolishing of a roof without edge protection could also have resulted in a serious incident."

“While these companies may have wanted health and safety compliance, their failure to pay enough attention to their actual performance at the site resulted in a tragedy occurring. No one should go to work and return unable to walk again”.

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. hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

Welsh dairy company fined after worker injured

A Wrexham-based dairy firm has been fined after a worker was covered in hot caustic and steam resulting in serious injuries.

Wrexham Magistrates’ Court heard how, on 3 May 2017, a Tomlinson’s Dairies Limited employee was modifying the pipework at the back of one of the plants when a pneumatic valve opened covering him in hot caustic and steam. The worker suffered serious burns to 27% of his resulting in a four week stay to recover in hospital.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to ensure the safe isolation of plant and pipework before work commenced. The company had relied on informal risk control systems and arrangements which were no longer sufficient for a business of its size.

Tomlinson’s Dairies Limited of Five Crosses Industrial Estate, Minera, Wrexham has pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and has been fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4267.20.

Speaking after the case, HSE inspector Gary Martin said “Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of work and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working.

“If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life-changing injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented.”

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East Midlands company fined after worker injures hand

A Leicester-based packaging manufacturer has today been sentenced after an employee suffered severe injuries to a number of his fingers.

Leicester Crown Court heard how, on 4 March 2016, an employee of CPS Flexible Limited (now called Fusion Flexibles Limited) was operating a conversion machine with a heated blade to cut through the plastic sheets. Whilst the employee was cleaning this hot blade, it lowered without warning causing severe, irreversible injuries to three fingers on his right hand.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to both identify this risk of the blade lowering without warning and to put in place appropriate measures to eliminate the risk.

CPS Flexible Limited of Ratby Lane, Leicester pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and has been fined £50,000 and ordered to pay costs of £8,825.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Mark Austin said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided if the company had taken measures to prevent this risk of the blade falling without warning, an issue with the machine that was known to many of the employees beforehand.

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

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[Hertfordshire company fined for dangerous gas installations](#)

A Hampshire-based utilities company has today been fined for dangerous gas installations at Royal Veterinary College.

St. Alban's Crown Court heard how Dimension Data Advanced Infrastructure Ltd had been sub-contracted to carry out all the gas, plumbing and above ground drainage work at the College from December 2010 until September 2011. Multiple gas leaks were found across a new student village, putting hundreds of students housed on the campus at risk.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found 50 incorrect fittings had been used with cheaper water fittings being used instead of gas fittings. The installation was classified as 'Immediately Dangerous' under the gas safe classification scheme. At the time the work was carried out neither Dimension Data Advanced Infrastructure Ltd nor any of its employees were registered on the Gas Safe Register.

Dimension Data Advanced Infrastructure Ltd of Fleet, Hampshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £466,660 and ordered to pay costs of £11,548.68.

Speaking after the case, HSE inspector Graham Tompkins said “Unregistered gas work puts people and property at real risk. Working with gas appliances is difficult, specialised and potentially very dangerous, so it is vital that this is only undertaken by trained and competent engineers who are registered with Gas Safe.

“HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate action against rogue gas fitters who disregard the new law and place lives at risk. All gas work must be done by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life.”

Further information about gas safety can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/>

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[Worker injured after being struck by fencing panels](#)

A security fencing manufacturing company has been fined after a worker sustained significant injuries on site.

Liverpool Magistrates’ Court heard how, on 23 February 2017, John Evans, an employee of Blok N Mesh Limited had been helping to manually load fencing panels into shipping containers when approximately 34 panels fell on him. Mr Evans suffered significant injuries as a result including; a broken left shoulder, fractured vertebrae in his neck, two broken ribs, contusions to his lungs, and soft tissue damage to his face.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), found that workers

were put at risk by the company not having suitable control measures in place to load the panels safely to prevent them from falling. There had been two previous incidents of fencing falling on workers, which should have acted as a warning to the company that the loading procedure was dangerous.

The investigation also found that the company failed to ensure that work was sufficiently planned, risks were assessed and controlled and that a safe system of work was in place. The company subsequently loaded the fencing using specially designed stillages, eliminating the need for workers to be inside the container, and therefore significantly reducing the risk of injury.

Blok N Mesh Limited of Leytonstone House, Leytonstone, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) and Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £260,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,177.30.

Speaking after the incident, HSE inspector Helen Jones said "This incident could so easily have been avoided by ensuring workers weren't put in a dangerous situation, where unsecured fence panels could easily fall and cause serious injury.

"This company had two previous accidents in identical situations, which should have served as a warning that the system in place was dangerous should they have heeded this warning, the serious injuries suffered by Mr Evans could have been prevented.".

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4. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg246.pdf>

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