

Maintenance company fined after worker falls from height

A commercial maintenance company has been fined after a friend of the director suffered injuries to his torso when he fell through the roof of a warehouse.

Cheltenham Magistrates' Court heard how on 8 May 2017, Stephen Bowkett was completing unpaid work with his friend Terry Adams, the Director of Atec Maintenance Ltd, to install netting on the roof of Weird Fish Limited in Cheltenham. After removing his harness to go for a break Stephen stepped backwards and fell more than six metres through the roof to the warehouse floor.

He suffered impact injuries to his abdomen and continues to be prescribed medication for severe pain. He is regularly admitted to hospital and struggles to complete everyday tasks.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Atec Maintenance Ltd failed to ensure that work at height was properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a safe manner.

Atec Maintenance Ltd of Tretawn Gardens, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4 (1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay costs of £8,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Stacey Gamwell said: "Falls through fragile roofs are a common cause of serious and fatal injuries, this incident was wholly avoidable. The precautions are well established.

"Workers should avoid standing on roofs where possible by using an elevated work platform. However, if standing on the roof is unavoidable, suitable controls should be put in place such as close-fitting safety nets, guard rails and roof coverings."

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. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Further information about safe techniques for working at height can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg33.htm>

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