

Building contractor and director fined after fire risk failings

A building contractor has been fined £600,000 and its director has been ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid work and fined £4,200 following serious and repeated failings in managing the risk of fire during work at a construction site.

In January 2018 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) undertook a proactive inspection to investigate health and safety failings by S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited at a construction site at Regent House, Brentwood, Essex after a concern was raised that people were sleeping on site.

The subsequent HSE investigation, which was assisted by Essex Fire & Rescue Service, identified failings in fire management at the site which created risks to workers and members of the public who were visiting show flats outside of business hours.

The environment at Regent House was poorly managed and the construction work was being carried out in an unsafe manner which could have resulted in a fire.

S&S Quality Building Contractors had previously been subject to HSE interventions after risks of a fire had been identified across a number of sites over several years. Evidence gathered during the proactive HSE investigation indicated that the company director Shlomo Pines regularly attended the Regent House site and failed to implement improvements from previous HSE interventions.

S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited of Hawthorn Business Park, Granville Road, London, pleaded guilty to breaching 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £600,000 and ordered to pay costs of £36,894 at Basildon Crown Court on 25 October 2022.

Company director Shlomo Pines, of St. Johns Road, Golders Green, London pleaded guilty to contravening Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He received a community order to complete 100 hours of unpaid work and was fined £4,200.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Prentiss Clarke-Jones said: "S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited completely ignored the importance of fire safety measures on a construction site led by a director who wilfully chose to ignore the risks despite evidence he knew how to make things safe. This unsurprisingly resulted in a site where risks were also ignored by his workers.

"Follow the guidance, get competent advice and take responsibility that the law requires at the very least, or someone may get hurt, which thankfully did not eventuate here."

Notes to editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. hse.gov.uk^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Read more about Fire Safety in Construction: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg168.htm>

HSE now leading investigation into death of Louis Watkiss

The investigation into the death of a child at Tamworth SnowDome has now been formally handed over to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

A joint investigation was launched at the time of the tragic incident, led by Staffordshire Police. Following the handover, HSE will now lead the criminal investigation.

Twelve-year-old Louis Watkiss was in a toboggan when it collided with one of the snow centre's employees on Friday, 24 September, 2021. Louis suffered fatal injuries in the collision.

Andrew Johnson, Principal Inspector at HSE, said: "We continue to prioritise and thoroughly investigate the death of Louis, to establish any breaches of health and safety law.

"We are in regular contact with Louis' family."

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

New podcast for the construction industry

A podcast for the construction industry has been launched this week by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Supporting the *Work Right Construction: Your Health. Your Future* campaign, this new episode discusses the impact and the prevention of the serious aches, pains and strains that can affect every part of a construction worker's life.

In the episode, Matt Birtles, Principal Ergonomics and Human Factors Consultant at HSE, which is Great Britain's workplace regulator, and Peter Crosland, National Civil Engineering Director at the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), talk about what the construction industry can do to promote change and protect its workforce.

Last year, 40,000 construction workers reported suffering with serious aches, pains and strains, more formally known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

The conversation covers the impact that these injuries can have on workers, employers' legal responsibilities and the sensible control measures that can be introduced regardless of the size of the construction site.

The podcast launches as HSE inspectors carry out 1,000 inspections this month and next, checking how workers are moving heavy or bulky materials.

Matt said that if moving and lifting is managed properly, a physical job on a building site should not result in aches, pains and strains which affect every part of workers' lives.

He said: "They can struggle to get themselves dressed and undressed, they can be unable to pick up their children or grandchildren.

"They can struggle to sit down and stand up, they can struggle to keep still and move around. The most intimate parts of their lives can be severely affected – they might be desperate to go the toilet but find themselves unable.

"It's not something that many people feel comfortable talking about, perhaps particularly on a building site, but if your back has gone or if you're in agony whenever you move your arms, measures need to be put in place to address the causes."

- Listen to the podcast here:
<https://hsepodcast.podbean.com/e/manual-handling-in-construction/>
- Find out more and download free HSE resources, including an MSDs poster here:
<https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/workright-construction-your->

Update – Oakwood Theme Park – 11am 24/10/22

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is investigating an incident on the Treetops rollercoaster at Oakwood Theme Park in Pembrokeshire. The incident took place on Sunday October 23.

The park is currently closed to the public.

Sian Clayton, HSE's head of operations in Wales, said: "Our inspectors are investigating an incident on the Treetops rollercoaster at Oakwood Theme Park. We will provide more information when we can."

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Company fined £20,000 after worker fell through station canopy

A Tyne and Wear engineering company has been fined £20,000 after a worker fractured his pelvis and suffered internal injuries after falling through a petrol station forecourt canopy.

The employee of G Nicholson (Engineers) Limited was replacing guttering at the top of the canopy on the company's petrol station in Blue House Lane, Washington, Tyne and Wear, on 5 December 2019.

As he was removing corrugated metal sheets to access sections of the guttering below, he was knocked off balance when a gust of wind caught the sheet, causing him to fall approximately 4 metres through a fragile section

of the canopy on to concrete below.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that a risk assessment should have been carried out and had a method statement been produced, this would have identified the need for effective control measures to prevent employees falling from the edge of the canopy or through the exposed fragile roof surface.

G Nicholson (Engineers) Limited, of Blue House Lane, Washington Tyne and Wear pleaded guilty to breaching Section 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 at Gateshead Magistrates' Court on 12 October 2022 and was fined £20,000, with £7,825 costs and a victim surcharge of £190.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Scott Wynne said: "A worker suffered serious injuries which could have easily been avoided if the company had adopted appropriate control measures when carrying out this task.

"This incident highlights the importance of conducting a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, and using the findings of that assessment to ensure the work is properly planned, appropriately supervised and, ultimately, carried out in a safe manner."

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