

Orkney company fined after employee fell through fragile roof

A cheese company has been fined £8,000 after an employee was seriously injured when he fell through a fragile roof.

Kirkwall Sheriff Court heard how, on 30 October 2017, an employee of Orkney Cheese Company Limited was asked by the general manager to retrieve a dead mouse from an unfloored loft area. After doing this by crawling along ceiling joists, he then placed his foot on a fragile board which had been left behind when the factory was built. The board gave way and he fell approximately 2.5 metres to the reception below.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Orkney Cheese Company Limited ordinarily brought in external contractors to deal with vermin issues and that employees were not normally required to work at height within the business. The investigation found that, on this occasion, the employee fell through the suspended ceiling and suffered a significant injury because no control measures had been implemented to safely cross the unfloored loft.

Orkney Cheese Company Limited of Crowness Road, Kirkwall, Orkney pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4 of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £8,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Norman Schouten said:

"Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known. Working on or near fragile surfaces should be properly assessed and managed. "This case highlights the importance for companies to assess and control risks created by non-routine tasks."

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.

Company fined following asbestos exposure during maintenance work

A wood processing company has been fined after unsafe asbestos work was carried out at its premises in Macclesfield.

Manchester and Salford Magistrates' Court heard how, on 20 October 2016, in the aftermath of a large explosion at the Bosley site, Wood Treatment Ltd was directed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to fit new explosion relief panels to an asbestos cement-clad warehouse.

During an inspection by two HSE inspectors to assess progress, it was noticed that asbestos cement panels of the warehouse had been removed, cut to shape with power tools and replaced, breaching the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

The HSE investigation into the incident found that while an external company had been contracted to fit the explosion relief panels, they did not work with asbestos containing materials, instead employees of Wood Treatment Limited removed the cladding. Following installation of the panels, some remedial work was necessary to repair holes left in the wall. The old asbestos sheets were cut to size and refitted.

Although the company was fully aware of the presence of asbestos and had an Asbestos Survey and Action Plan, this information was not shared with employees and measures were not put in place to contain the risks involved.

Wood Treatment Ltd of Tunstall Road, Bosley, Macclesfield pleaded guilty to a breach of Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,000 and a victim surcharge of £170.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Ian Betley said: "Asbestos is responsible for thousands of deaths in the UK every year but it only becomes dangerous when it is broken up and fibres are released into the air.

"Asbestos should only be removed by specialist contractors Wood Treatment Ltd put workers at risk by not following the correct safety procedures."

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4. For further information please go to: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/a14.pdf>

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Siemens and E-On fined after worker injured

Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery Limited and E.On UK Plc. have been fined after a roof panel fell on a worker during turbine maintenance work.

Dumfries Sherriff Court heard how, between February and March 2013, Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery Limited undertook maintenance work on a turbine at Steven's Croft PowerStation, near Lockerbie for E.On UK Plc.

The court heard that before the turbine could be accessed, acoustic panels were removed from an enclosure surrounding the turbine, including some from the roof of the enclosure. On 11 March 2013, an overhead travelling crane was being used to lift parts of the turbine out of the chamber when a roof panel fell from the top of the enclosure onto the head of a Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery Limited employee, causing him to sustain neck and spine injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the lifting operation carried out at the time of the incident was not properly planned, appropriately supervised or carried out in a safe manner. Furthermore, safe access into the enclosure was not provided to workers, nor were they given information regarding the structure of the enclosure.

Siemens Industrial Turbomachinery Limited of Faraday House, Camberley, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 8 of the Lifting Operation and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 and was fined £12,000.

E.On UK PLC pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £10,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE principal inspector Hazel Dobb said, "The contractor's injuries were severe and he could have easily been killed. This serious incident could have been avoided if basic safe guards had been put in place.

"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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Richard Judge steps down as HSE chief executive

Dr Richard Judge has stepped down as chief executive of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on Friday, 17 August, having led the organisation since November 2014.

Dr Judge has left his post after having overseen significant improvements to the way HSE regulates and engages with industry and employer representatives, to deliver on its core purpose of preventing workplace ill health, injury and death.

Those achievements have built on HSE’s strong regulatory framework and assurance to tackle workplace harm. Dr Judge also strengthened HSE’s capability.

Martin Temple CBE, Chair of HSE, said: “On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Richard for his important contribution to our organisation and to helping to protect workers and the environment, and wish him well in the future.”

About HSE

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Forge company fined after worker killed

A hot metal forging company has today been sentenced for safety breaches following the death of a worker.

Sheffield Crown Court heard how, on 17 July 2015, Billy Fairweather, 35, was tasked with hammering down pieces of hard alloy in a team of four. One of the pieces Mr Fairweather was working on was small but still hard alloy so he moved from the small hammer he had been assigned to a more powerful one.

Due to the small size of the work piece and the large size of the hammer, it was necessary for Mr Fairweather to be positioned low down and close to the hammer, down on one knee or in a kneeling position. The piece he was working on misaligned and was ejected – it threw Mr Fairweather backwards, leading to, fatal injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to allocate the job to the correct hammer and crew, and failed to properly assess the risks involved with hammering small components on large hammers. The investigation also found the company failed to provide a safe system of work that considered communication and which allowed line of sight of the work piece.

Abbey Forged Products Ltd, of Beeley wood Lane, Sheffield, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £500,000 with £23,756.47 cost.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Carol Downes commented: “This tragic incident could easily have been prevented if the employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, put a safe system of work in place, and to ensure that the job was allocated to the appropriate equipment.

“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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