

Construction company fined after worker seriously injured

A construction company has been fined after a worker suffered serious injuries when the first floor of the building he was standing on collapsed underneath him.

Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court heard how Huntsmere Projects Limited was the principal contractor for the construction of a new house in Alderley Edge. A subcontractor had installed the first floor but a gap left between the concrete beams on the landing was not identified by the Huntsmere site manager nor the contractor's supervisor.

On the 22 April 2014, a 47-year-old worker fell approximately 3.5 metres when the concrete block beneath his feet gave way and he fell between two concrete beams, suffering serious multiple fractures.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the collapse occurred as a result of some of the installed floor blocks becoming displaced during the work on site because of the gap. Huntsmere Projects Limited did not take all practicable steps to prevent danger to workers from collapse of a part of the new building. The investigation found that the company should have ensured that the floor was installed as per the design and failed to identify the gap which allowed the floor blocks to move.

Huntsmere Projects Ltd, of Alderley Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £240,000 with £14,439.53 costs.

HSE inspector, Deborah Walker, said after the hearing: "As principal contractor, Huntsmere Projects Limited was responsible for safety on the site including ensuring proper planning and co-ordination on the part of all involved in the project.

"Huntsmere Project Limited also had a duty to monitor and control the other contractors that it had engaged – the collapse could have been avoided had the company fulfilled its duties in its role as principal contractor"

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We seek to 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>
4. More information regarding safe working in the construction industry can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm>

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

Worker suffers life changing injury after pressure test failure

Three companies, Sembcorp Utilities (UK) Limited, Central Industrial Services (Northern) Ltd and R & A Kay Inspection Services Ltd, were sentenced today after an employee suffered serious fractures to his leg.

Teesside Crown Court heard that on 3 December 2013, the injured person, Mr Dennis Chadwick, an employee of R & A Kay Inspection Services Ltd, was taking part in a pressure test of a boiler at Sembcorp's Biomass power station at Wilton, Cleveland. CIS Industrial Services was assisting in the pressure test undertaken by Sembcorp. Mr Chadwick was there to verify the test.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuting told the court, a valve on a pressure test rig was pressurised above the safe working limit and failed, causing the hose and metal fitting assembly to whip round, striking Mr Chadwick on the right leg, causing serious compound fractures.

Sembcorp Utilities (UK) Limited of Wilton International, Middlesbrough, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £1,350,000 and ordered to pay costs of £33,000.

Central Industrial Services (Northern) Ltd of Skippers Lane Industrial Estate, Middlesbrough, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £125,000 with £2,000 costs.

R & A Kay Inspection Services Ltd of Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £37,500 with £33,000 costs.

The injured person, Mr Dennis Chadwick said "It has been nearly four years since I was injured. My life changed that day and the impact on my family and me has been immense. In July I had my leg amputated from the knee down and I will now have to learn to walk with a prosthetic but I am determined to get my life back."

After the hearing, HSE principal inspector Victoria Wise said: "All three companies failed Mr Chadwick. If appropriate pressure relief had been fitted and the companies had put in place a system of work that was safe then Dennis would not have exposed to the harm he suffered.

"After three years of repeated surgery, unfortunately his leg had to be amputated below the knee. Dennis did not leave home that day to become a casualty of work."

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Construction firm fined after worker fell from height

West Hill Projects Ltd has been fined more than £95,000 after a worker fell from height.

Hammersmith Magistrates' Court heard that on 5 December 2016 the individual was working next to a large opening in a flat roof on Wandle Road in London. He fell about 3.3m through the opening to the ground below and suffered four fractured vertebrae, a fractured rib and a scalp wound. He was unable to work for several months following the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that West Hill Projects Ltd had failed to take any measures to prevent people on site falling through the opening in the flat roof. People had been working in the area in the days beforehand and the company had not properly planned the project.

West Hill Projects Ltd of Seymour Road, London pleaded guilty to breaching

Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £95,604.80 and ordered to pay costs of £988.80.

Speaking after the incident HSE Inspector Owen Rowley said: "The risks associated with work at height are well known throughout the construction industry. West Hill Projects Ltd failed to control the risk on site and one of its workers suffered serious injuries as a result.

"It is vitally important that those in control of work at height implement suitable and sufficient measures to prevent falls. The simple step of installing edge protection around the opening could have prevented this incident from occurring.'

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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>

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Construction worker suffers fracture to his back after a fall from height

Dufell Roofing Company Ltd, a Darlington based roofing company was sentenced today after an employee suffered a fracture to his back requiring surgery.

Newcastle Crown Court heard the injured person, Mr Stephen Merryweather, an employee of Dufell Roofing Company Ltd, was in the process of fitting new plywood boards over the top of existing wood wool slabs on a roof at a site in Morpeth on 15 April 2015. Two employees were in the process of positioning the second plywood board when the injured person fell four metres through one of the wood wool slabs onto the floor of the plant room, colliding with internal pipework.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuting told the court the firm

should have identified that the roofs were potentially fragile and should have planned the work around this fact, with measures in place to prevent a fall through a fragile surface.

Dufell Roofing Company Limited of Alexander House, Faverdale Industrial Estate, Darlington pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 15(2) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and was fined £25,000 with £24,572.84 costs, plus a victim surcharge of £120.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Andrea Robbins said: "This injury was easily prevented and the risk should have been identified"

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Company and director sentenced after work left seriously injured

A Swindon-based scaffolding company and its director have been sentenced after a worker was left with life-changing injuries.

Swindon Magistrates' Court heard how the worker was erecting scaffolding on 19 December 2016 when the structure came into contact with 33KV overhead power lines. The father of five received an electric shock which led to the amputation of his left arm above the elbow, right arm below the elbow and both of his feet. The 32-year-old also suffered severe burns to his legs and back, damage to his vocal chords, and was in an induced coma for six weeks.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the scaffolding should not have been built to that height so close to overhead power lines. The company and its director failed to ensure a safe system of work was in place for erecting a scaffold under overhead power lines.

Boundary Scaffolding Limited, of Unit 10 Kendrick Industrial Estate Swindon

SN2 2DU, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £80,000 and has been ordered to pay full costs of £1415.10.

Company director Jonathon Lee Griffiths-Clack, of 12 Grosmont Drive, Swindon, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 as well as Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended for 12 months. He has been ordered to repay costs of £1545.30.

In a statement the injured man Jamie Mines said: "I can't quite put into words how it feels to wake up with no hands. I had five-month-old twin girls at the time of the accident, all I could think of when I woke up was the things I wouldn't be able to do, for example I wouldn't be able to hold my babies' hands again, I wouldn't be able to draw, play catch or teach my girls any of the things that I had learned with my hands.

"There's so many things I can't do it's hard to imagine, but to never feel anything with my hands again is what I struggle with the most.

"Sitting here now in my wheelchair nine months after the accident and I still don't walk, for a man who was very active before the accident it has been extremely difficult! I was a keen a sportsman as well as someone who enjoyed his job and was really hands on with my babies. How my life has changed is almost indescribable."

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Ian Whittles said: "This incident could have been prevented had the company and its director properly planned a safe system of work and ensured the scaffolding was erected in line with HSE regulations. Due to their failings, a young father of five has been left with life-changing injuries and the lives of an entire family have been changed forever."

Further safety in construction guidance can be found here:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/overhead.htm>

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