

Timber company fined £80,000 after worker hurt in fall

A Devon-based timber company has been fined £80,000 after an employee fell through a stairwell while working on a barn conversion.

The 49-year-old driver and warehouse operative, employed by Lamisell Limited, was working on the barn, which was being converted for rental use, at the company's address near Okehampton, on 14 May 2018.

He was trying to access the first floor of the barn from exterior scaffolding and jumped onto a piece of insulation which was covering a stairwell. The insulation gave way and the worker fractured two vertebrae in the fall.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the work was not properly planned, appropriately supervised, or carried out in a safe manner when the incident occurred. The company had a duty to control how the work was carried out, including staff supervision.

Lamisell Limited, of Meeth, Okehampton, Devon pleaded guilty to breaching Section 4 (1) of the Work at Height Regs 2005, and was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,331 at Poole Magistrates' Court on August 31, 2022. The company also ordered to pay a £170 victim surcharge.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Peter Buscombe said: "This worker's injuries were serious. This incident could have been avoided if basic safeguards had been put in place.

"Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related fatalities and injuries in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well-known."

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](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at [http://press.hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk/press/)