

# Two firms fined after worker fractures neck during platform collapse

- Temporary wooden platforms collapsed during refurbishment project in City of London
- Steve Zschoch, 60, described being 'folded up like a concertina' and has not been able to work since.
- HSE guidance is clear temporary structures must be designed, installed and maintained to withstand any foreseeable loads.

Two construction companies have been fined after a drilling operative sustained fractures to his neck and back when a temporary platform loaded with concrete debris collapsed on top of him.

Steve Zschoch, now 60, was working for contractors Diacutt Limited on 23 February 2024 at a construction project at Paxton House in the City of London. The refurbishment project, which was being run by principal contractor Roots Contractors Limited, involved cutting openings through five concrete floors to create a service riser shaft.



A temporary platform loaded with concrete debris collapsed on top of Steve Zschoch

Roots Contractors Ltd had instructed its carpenters to build temporary wooden platforms under each opening to collect the 16kg concrete cores and debris that were generated by the cutting.

Mr Zschoch had been cutting an opening on the third floor, working directly under one of the temporary platforms, when it suddenly gave way and collapsed on top of him, along with chunks of concrete that had not been cleared away.

He described being "folded up like a concertina." He sustained injuries including fractures to his neck, his back and a bleed on his brain. He described the profound impact of the incident on his day to day life;

*"The impact this incident has had on me has been life changing in so many ways, he said.*

*"Not just in mobility issues but in my confidence to do just about anything.*

*"Even simple domestic tasks, like using the launderette or going to the shops can overwhelm me now. Emotionally as well as physically."*

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that there was no design for the temporary platforms and no calculation had been made for the safe level of loading.



Steve Zschoch suffered a fractured neck in the incident

While an inspection form for the platform was completed, it failed to identify any issues with the design, and the person tasked to complete it was not a competent temporary works coordinator. We also found that although there had been a verbal instruction for workers to regularly clear the platforms of concrete and not 'overload' them, no safe level of loading was known, and there was no monitoring of whether the platforms were indeed cleared.

HSE also found deficiencies in the planning, managing and monitoring of the work by the contractor.

- Risk assessments and method statements provided by Diacutt in advance were inconsistent and their requirements for the principal contractor to provide 'crash decks' were unclear.
- There was no supervision of the drilling team by Diacutt management in the week leading up to the incident or on the day.
- While operatives understood that they should not work directly below one another, there was a lack of coordination and clarity as to who should have been working where.

Temporary works must be carefully managed. The law says any temporary structure must be designed, installed and maintained to withstand any foreseeable loads which may be imposed on it and that it be only used for the

purposes for which it was designed, installed and maintained. They should be inspected by a competent person on a regular basis. Guidance on temporary works is available at [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk).

Roots Contractors Limited of Ewell, Surrey pleaded guilty to breaching The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, Regulation 16(2). The company was fined £19,333 plus costs of £5,548 at a hearing at Westminster Magistrates' court on 11 June 2026.

Diacutt Limited of Croydon pleaded guilty to breaching The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, Regulation 15(2) and was fined £13,000 plus costs of £5,548 at the same hearing.

**HSE inspector Lucy Ellison-Dunn said:**

“People rightly expect that when they go to work, they are not put in unnecessary danger, and this entirely avoidable incident had the effect of seriously injuring Mr Zschoch and ending his construction career much earlier than he wanted.

“Those providing temporary works have a duty to ensure that any temporary structure is properly designed and constructed to withstand any foreseeable load that might be imposed on it.

“This means having appropriate arrangements in place to manage temporary works. Contractors should ensure all construction work is properly planned, managed and monitored to ensure workers can carry out their work safely.”

The prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyers Chloe Ward and Jon Mack, supported by Thomas Smith.

**Notes to Editors**

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Relevant guidance on [temporary works](#) is available can be found here and also about the duties of contractors to [plan, manage and monitor construction work](#).
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).