

Unlicensed contractor fined for exposing workers to asbestos

A Norwich based construction company has been sentenced today for carrying out unlicensed asbestos cleaning work.

Norwich Magistrates' Court heard how the company began a project to refurbish parts of Rose Lane Business Centre in Norwich, including former kitchen and canteen. Work started on east side of the ground level in April 2015 and various phases continued into November 2015. It was during the later phase when significant exposure to asbestos materials occurred.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the workers had little awareness of asbestos on site and no prior Asbestos Awareness Training.

The investigation revealed that no Demolition and Refurbishment Asbestos Survey had been in place before the project started. However, when one was carried out following HSE intervention, it discovered licensed asbestos debris on the ground level within the area the size of a football pitch. Despite these findings and surveyor's recommendations, the unlicensed contractor proceeded to clean the debris between 1 October and 6 October 2015, dry sweeping and vacuuming the area.

Y Construction Ltd of The Union Building, 51-59 Rose Lane, Norwich was found guilty of breaching Regulations 8(1), 10(1) and 11(1) of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and was fined £250,000 with costs of £6,512.88.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Kasia Urbaniak said: "The dangers associated with asbestos, including licensed asbestos are well known and a wealth of advice and guidance is freely available from the HSE website.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.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.