

Companies fined for failing to comply with work at height regulations

A large homebuilder and an electrical contractor have been sentenced for failing to comply with work at height regulations, resulting in serious injury of an electrician and placing other workers at risk of injury.

Southampton Magistrates' Court heard that on 10 May 2018, workers were carrying out work to lay cabling and ducting in loft spaces at newly built residential properties in Swanmore, Southampton without suitable or sufficient protection from falls at height. A 49-year-old electrician fell through the plasterboard loft flooring sustaining multiple fractures to his ribs, shoulders and vertebrae. He also suffered a punctured lung.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that BDW Trading Ltd the registered name of Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes; and Quayside Electrical Ltd had failed to prevent a fall from height. BWD Trading Ltd had created the loft space by installing the ceiling of the room below using plasterboard, known as top tacking, before the electricians had completed the installation of cables and ducting. This meant that work in the loft was above fragile plasterboard and sufficient precautions were not taken by either company to prevent the electrician from falling through the plasterboard.

BDW Trading Ltd of Barratt House, Cartwright Way, Forest Business Park, Bardon Hill, Coalville, Leicestershire pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of The Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £140,000, ordered to pay costs of £3,689.15 and a victim surcharge of £170.

Quayside Electrical Ltd of Unit 22, Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate, Southampton, Hampshire pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of The Work at Height Regulations 2005. They were fined £20,000 ordered to pay costs of £3,521.15 and a victim surcharge of £170.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Fiona Woods said: "Falls from height remain the most common cause of work-related fatalities and serious injuries in the construction industry. The risks associated with working at height are well known. It is important that those in control of working at height take appropriate control measures to safeguard workers and others."

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.
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>
4. Further information on working safely ay height can be found at:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/key-messages.htm>

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