

Company fined £20,000 after worker fell through station canopy

A Tyne and Wear engineering company has been fined £20,000 after a worker fractured his pelvis and suffered internal injuries after falling through a petrol station forecourt canopy.

The employee of G Nicholson (Engineers) Limited was replacing guttering at the top of the canopy on the company's petrol station in Blue House Lane, Washington, Tyne and Wear, on 5 December 2019.

As he was removing corrugated metal sheets to access sections of the guttering below, he was knocked off balance when a gust of wind caught the sheet, causing him to fall approximately 4 metres through a fragile section of the canopy on to concrete below.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that a risk assessment should have been carried out and had a method statement been produced, this would have identified the need for effective control measures to prevent employees falling from the edge of the canopy or through the exposed fragile roof surface.

G Nicholson (Engineers) Limited, of Blue House Lane, Washington Tyne and Wear pleaded guilty to breaching Section 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 at Gateshead Magistrates' Court on 12 October 2022 and was fined £20,000, with £7,825 costs and a victim surcharge of £190.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Scott Wynne said: "A worker suffered serious injuries which could have easily been avoided if the company had adopted appropriate control measures when carrying out this task.

"This incident highlights the importance of conducting a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, and using the findings of that assessment to ensure the work is properly planned, appropriately supervised and, ultimately, carried out in a safe manner."

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>