

Construction company fined after worker breaks back in fall from height

A construction company has been sentenced for failing to comply with work at height regulations after a worker fell through a fibre cement roof sheet sustaining serious injuries.

High Wycombe Magistrates' Court heard that on 6 September 2018, Ross Sly was replacing the roof of an agricultural building in Reading when he stepped across a roof-light onto a fibre cement roof sheet, which gave way. He fell approximately four metres on to the workshop floor, sustaining multiple fractures to his spine.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that sole trader Mark Wakefield, trading as Mark Wakefield Construction, had failed to take reasonably practicable precautions to safeguard his workers during the re-roofing work.

The workers had been put at risk of falling through fragile roof sheets above areas of the buildings where safety nets had not been installed, underneath the fragile roof sheets. The employer had also failed to put edge protection in place around the perimeter of the main building and workshop to prevent the risk of a fall.

Mark Wakefield of Hilltop Farm, Greenhill, Swindon pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4 (1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £1,400 and ordered to pay costs of £2,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Chris Redfern 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 work at height identify the risks and implement appropriate control measures to safeguard workers.

"HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those who 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.
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 at height can be found at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/key-messages.htm>

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