

Construction company fined after worker falls through fragile roof

A construction company from Leicestershire has been fined £80,000 after an employee suffered serious injuries falling through a fragile roof.

An employee of Cairns Heritage Homes Limited was carrying out a repair to the roof of Nottingham Recycling Limited on 1 August 2019 when he fell approximately 7m to the floor below.

A scaffold tower had been constructed for access to the roof but there were inadequate measures in place to ensure that the work would be completed safely.

The worker accessed the roof, attempting to devise his own ad-hoc working methods which included constructing a makeshift ladder/staging system from wooden planks.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Cairns Heritage Homes Limited had been contracted to repair the roof of the recycling plant while a 'bailing machine' was not being used.

Serious deficiencies in the planning and supervision of this work were identified together with the absence of a safe system of work.

There were insufficient measures to prevent a fall or minimise the distance or consequences of a fall such as safety netting. The makeshift staging provided by the employee was insufficient and failed to prevent a fall through the fragile roof panels resulting in them sustaining serious injuries.

Cairns Heritage Homes Limited, of Rectory Place, Old Parsonage Lane, Hoton, Loughborough, Leicestershire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £9,981 at Nottingham Magistrates' Court on 28 September 2022.

Speaking after the hearing HSE Inspector Philip Gratton said: "Work on fragile roofs accounts for around a fifth of all fatal incidents that occur in the construction industry.

"Those in control of work on fragile roofs and other work at height have a responsibility to devise safe methods of work and to provide the necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision of their workers.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to this incident, the life-changing injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We seek to 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
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. Guidance on working at height can be found here: [Work at height – HSE](#)
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>