

Construction company fined after worker seriously injured

A construction company has been fined after a worker suffered serious injuries when the first floor of the building he was standing on collapsed underneath him.

Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court heard how Huntsmere Projects Limited was the principal contractor for the construction of a new house in Alderley Edge. A subcontractor had installed the first floor but a gap left between the concrete beams on the landing was not identified by the Huntsmere site manager nor the contractor's supervisor.

On the 22 April 2014, a 47-year-old worker fell approximately 3.5 metres when the concrete block beneath his feet gave way and he fell between two concrete beams, suffering serious multiple fractures.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the collapse occurred as a result of some of the installed floor blocks becoming displaced during the work on site because of the gap. Huntsmere Projects Limited did not take all practicable steps to prevent danger to workers from collapse of a part of the new building. The investigation found that the company should have ensured that the floor was installed as per the design and failed to identify the gap which allowed the floor blocks to move.

Huntsmere Projects Ltd, of Alderley Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £240,000 with £14,439.53 costs.

HSE inspector, Deborah Walker, said after the hearing: "As principal contractor, Huntsmere Projects Limited was responsible for safety on the site including ensuring proper planning and co-ordination on the part of all involved in the project.

"Huntsmere Project Limited also had a duty to monitor and control the other contractors that it had engaged – the collapse could have been avoided had the company fulfilled its duties in its role as principal contractor"

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. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. More information regarding safe working in the construction industry can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.