

# Contractors sentenced after employee breaks back in fall from height

A building contractor and a roofing contractor have been fined after an employee fell five metres from a first-floor extension, breaking several vertebrae in his lower back.

Liverpool Magistrates' Court heard that on 11 June 2018, Grayton Building Contractors Ltd was undertaking a first-floor extension to a residential bungalow in Noel Gate, Aughton. An employee was fitting fascia boards and soffits to allow roofers employed by Thomas Dean, who had arrived on site a week early, to commence work. Whilst stepping across a gap in the incomplete working platform to descend from the roof, the ladder, which was not tied, slipped sideways, causing him to fall. As a result of his injuries he was unable to work for eight weeks.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that both Grayton Building Contractors Ltd and the roofing contractor Thomas Dean failed to properly plan the work, to assess the risks and to provide appropriate supervision. Subsequently the work at height equipment selected was not suitable and the work was not carried out safely.

Grayton Building Contractors Ltd of Botanic Road, Churchtown, Southport pleaded guilty to a breach of Regulation 4 (1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £15,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,742

Thomas Dean of Youatt Avenue, Prescot, Merseyside pleaded guilty to a breach of Regulation 4 (1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £400 and ordered to pay costs of £3,000

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Andy McGrory said: "The risks from working at height are well known. Those in control of the work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working, which should include ensuring the use of suitable work equipment and adequate supervision.

"The incident could have easily been prevented with simple precautions including properly planning the work, undertaking a suitable risk assessment and by selecting, erecting and using suitable work at height equipment for the job."

**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. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [Work at height – Occupational health and safety \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>