

Fine for company after worker fell to his death from church steeple

A specialist construction company has been fined £60,000 after a worker fell to his death from a church steeple in Birmingham.

David Clover was employed by Ecclesiastical Steeplejacks Ltd to carry out restoration work to St Nicholas' Church in Kings Norton on 13 November 2020. The 64-year-old steeplejack had been suspended from the 60 metre tall steeple of the Grade 1 listed building, sitting in a 'bosun's chair' – a work positioning seat – when he fell, suffering fatal injuries.



Steeplejack David Clover was suspended from the 60 metre tall steeple carrying out restoration works

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) identified that the bosun's chair was not supported by a suitable backup system preventing falls, such as, a double or twin leg lanyard fall arrest harness.

Working at height remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries. 50 people died as a result of a fall from height in 2023/24. [HSE guidance is available](#).

Ecclesiastical Steeplejacks Ltd, which has ceased trading since the incident, pleaded guilty to contravening Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. It was fined £60,000 at a hearing at Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 15 January 2025.



Mr Clover had been sat in a 'bosun's chair' – a work positioning seat – when he fell, suffering fatal injuries

In passing sentence, Judge Quereshi found the company had outdated attitudes to managing health and safety.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Emma Page said: "Falls from height remain one of the leading causes of work-related deaths and injury in Great Britain.

"We will take action against companies that fail to protect workers.

"Our thoughts remain with the family of David Clover."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Julian White and paralegal officer Imogen Isaac.

Further information:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).
5. HSE guidance on [working safely at height](#) is available.