

Isle of Wight worker dies during demolition project

Three construction companies have been fined after a worker suffered fatal injuries while demolishing a two-storey building in preparation for a development project.



Portsmouth Crown Court heard how David Shayler, an employee of Ryde Demolition Limited, was removing roof timbers by hand with a colleague, when a gable wall partially collapsed causing him to fall backwards striking his head against a stack of roof tiles.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident which occurred on the 13 October 2016, found that the work was inadequately planned and managed by all the duty holders involved in the project, the technique used to remove the roof timbers was done out of sequence, and the brick gable had been left unstable. In addition, inadequate provision was made to prevent falls from height, despite concerns raised by workers in the days leading up to the incident.

Ryde Demolition Ltd of St Johns Hill, Ryde have pleaded guilty to breaching two counts of Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £12,132.02.

HJ Bennett Ltd of Pyle Street, Newport have pleaded guilty to breaching two counts of Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined £120,000 and ordered to pay costs of £12,057.62.

Stoneham Construction Limited of St Johns Place, Newport have pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015 and have been fined £56,667 and ordered to pay costs of £12,004.42.

Speaking after the case, HSE inspector Dominic Goacher said: "This was a tragic and wholly avoidable incident, caused by the companies' failure to implement safe systems of work."

“Demolition is a high-risk activity whose safe execution is complex and technical and where expertise is vital. The risk of unintended structural collapse is well known within the industry. Demolition requires careful planning and execution by contractors who are competent in the full range of demolition techniques.”

“Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related fatalities in this country, and the risks associated with working at height are well known. In this case the risks of structural collapse and falling from height were not controlled, which led to the preventable death of a father-of-two.”

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
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 about carrying demolition out safely can be found on HSE’s website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/demolition.htm>

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