

Property management consultancy and asbestos surveying company fined after inadequate refurbishment

A property management consultancy and an asbestos surveying company have been fined after an inadequate refurbishment and demolition survey was provided for a major refurbishment project including partial demolition.

Dudley Magistrates' Court heard how the survey undertaken by Home Inspectors Southern Limited failed to identify asbestos cement and asbestos insulating board (AIB) containing Chrysotile and Amosite asbestos.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the surveyor had no training in asbestos surveying or previous work experience with a suitably qualified person or accredited organisation. The survey also incorrectly advised that a non-licensed contractor could be engaged to remove the large quantity of AIB identified. Home Inspectors Southern Limited were not asked for any information by Vital Property Solutions Limited to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, experience and training relating to asbestos surveying.

Vital Property Solutions Limited of Desborough Street, High Wycombe pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company has been fined £8,400 and ordered to pay costs of £929.67.

Home Inspectors Southern Limited of Hawthorn Close, Brighton pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company has been fined £4,800 and ordered to pay costs of £929.67.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Edward Fryer said: "Asbestos surveyors have a duty of care to those persons who use the information they provide. The survey missed a significant amount of asbestos contaminated materials (ACM's) thus increasing the risk to workers, who would be disturbing the fabric of the buildings during the refurbishment/demolition project. The risk arises from workers unknowingly working on ACM, and not taking effective precautions to prevent exposure and spread of asbestos fibres. Where surveyors fall well short of the standard then HSE will take robust action.

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](https://www.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. Further information about health and safety on asbestos can be found at:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg264.htm>