

Roofer and scaffolder sentenced following fatal fall from height

A roofer and a scaffolder have been sentenced following a fatal fall from height at a two-storey terraced house on Rosevine Road, Wimbledon.

Southwark Crown Court heard that on 26 November 2018, Philip Drinkwater and Anthony Bradley were working on the roof, which was accessed using a ladder and scaffolding that had been erected by Dean Glen. Later that day, Mr Drinkwater asked his co-worker, Mr Glen, to help him move some slates up onto the roof using an electric hoist. While he was carrying out this operation, he fell approximately six metres through a gap, which was adjacent to the hoist and landed on the ground where he died almost immediately.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Mr Glen had erected the scaffold leaving a 1.17m gap in the edge protection at the ladder access point without fitting a scaffold gate. Mr Glen had erected the scaffold when not fully qualified to do so and it did not comply with industry standards or legal requirements. Mr Drinkwater was in charge of the roof work, which he allowed to proceed despite the gap and unsafe ladder access. He lacked the training to manage health and safety on the site and failed to appoint a suitably qualified scaffolder to erect the scaffold.

Philip Drinkwater (trading as Prestige Roofing) of Meldone Sheephouse Way, New Malden pleaded guilty to breaching section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He was fined £5,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,318.

Dean Glen (trading as DDP scaffolding) of Woodroyd Avenue, Horley pleaded guilty to breaching section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He was fined £5,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,318.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Kevin Smith: "The tragedy of this incident was that it was totally avoidable.

"Preventative measures were inexpensive and required little time or effort. Reducing the size of the opening in the guard rails and installing a self-closing scaffold gate would have stopped this man from falling to his death. A scaffold gate costs around £40 and only takes a few minutes to install.

"Those involved in scaffolding and roof work on smaller sites need to be aware of the potentially devastating consequences of failing to put basic safeguards in place."

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. Guidance on HSE's website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/faq-height.htm>

5. The National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) produce scaffold safety guidance which can be downloaded free via their website. This includes SG25:14 – Access and Egress from Scaffolds, via Ladders and stair Towers etc. which provides specific guidance on protecting access openings in guard rails on working platforms –

https://nasc.org.uk/shop/page/2/?swoof=1&product_cat=health-and-safety-guidance

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