

Roofing firm and company business partner sentenced following HSE investigations

- Company fined for failings in two separate incidents.
- Two workers seriously injured after falling through roofs in separate incidents.
- Business partner at scaffolding firm sentenced following incident in Swansea.

A roofing company has been fined a total of £881,000 after two workers were seriously injured during two separate incidents.

Billy Hewitt, a worker at Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited, fractured his pelvis after falling through a factory roof in Newcastle. Meanwhile, a 24-year-old labourer employed by RM Scaffolding broke his femur after falling through the roof of a building in Swansea while working on a project run by Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated both incidents and prosecuted Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited. Paul Robinson, a business partner at RM Scaffolding, was also prosecuted by HSE following the incident in Swansea.

On 11 November 2019, Billy Hewitt, 60, fractured his pelvis, left wrist and eye socket after falling through the roof of a factory in Throckley, Newcastle upon Tyne.

He had been replacing a skylight when he fell and landed on the concrete floor seven metres below. Billy was in hospital for three weeks after the incident.



The roof Billy had been working on

Billy, who is from Whickham, said: “You don’t go to work in the morning and expect to end up in intensive care but that’s what happened to me. It’s been four years since my accident and I don’t know really do anything with my days. I really miss work. I was a roofer for 40 years but this accident changed everything because I still can’t work. I used to earn a good wage, but now I’m classed as 51% disabled and I rely entirely on benefits.”

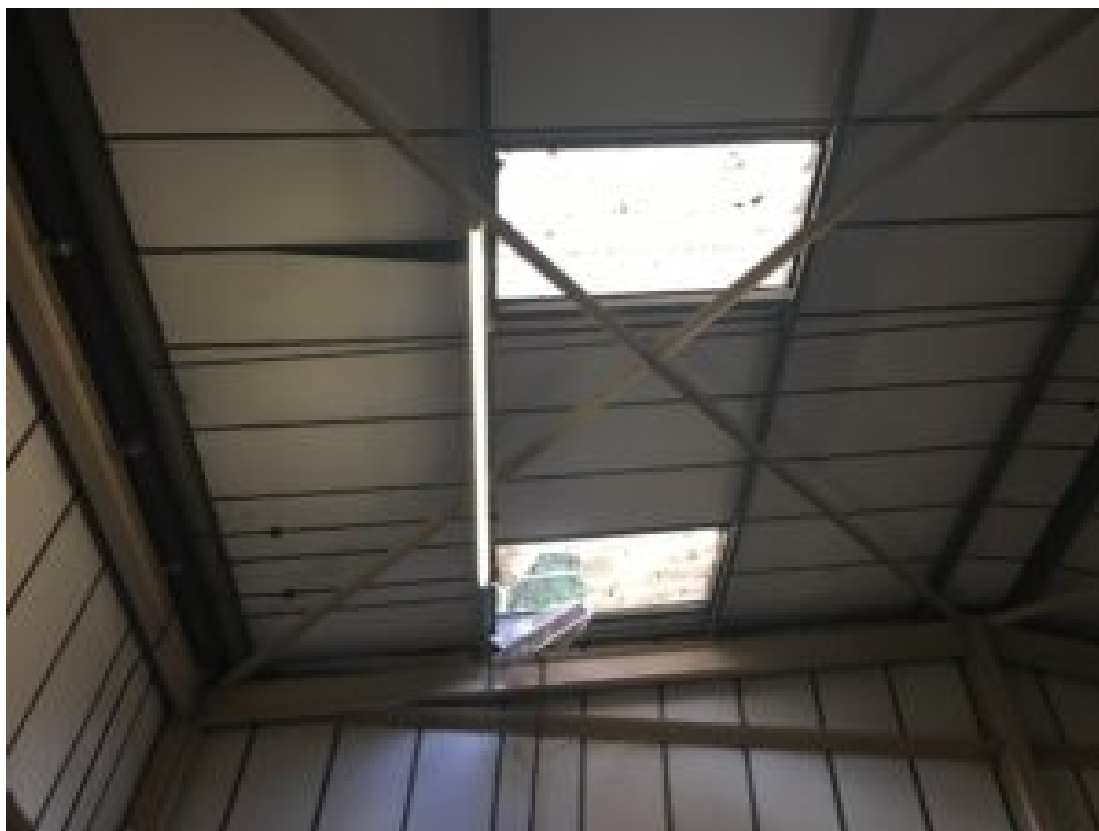
The HSE investigation found Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited failed to properly plan and carry out the work to replace the skylight. The work at height had not been thoroughly assessed as a standalone piece of work. The investigation also found that safety nets were in place on other sections of the roof but not directly underneath the skylight where the accident happened.



The roof Billy had been working on

HSE guidance can be found at: [Work at height – HSE](#)

On 3 June 2019, a scaffold labourer, employed by RM Scaffolding, was crossing a fragile roof when he fell through a skylight at a unit at Plasmarl Industrial Estate in Swansea. The 24-year-old landed on his back approximately 20 feet on the floor below. He fractured his femur and suffered a blood clot in one of his main arteries, which required long-term medication.



The roof of the unit at Plasmarl Industrial Estate

HSE found that Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited, the principal contractor for the project, failed to plan, manage and monitor the work undertaken by RM Scaffolding, the sub-contractor, to prevent unsafe work practices being used. Paul Robinson, a business partner at RM Scaffolding, failed to plan the work properly and ensure staff had appropriate skills, knowledge and experience. Robinson also failed to provide appropriate fall protection on the roof.

Following the incident on 11 November 2019, Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited, of London Bridge Street, London, was found guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005, following a two-week trial in April 2023. Following a three-day sentencing hearing at Newcastle Crown Court on 6 December 2023, Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited was fined £575,000 and ordered to pay £84,940.08 in costs.

Following the incident on 3 June 2019:

- Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Following a three-day sentencing hearing at Newcastle Crown Court on 6 December 2023, Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited was fined £306,000 and ordered to pay £27,410.63 in costs.
- Paul Robinson, of Laburnam Way, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. At Newcastle Crown Court, on 5 December 2023, he was sentenced to 120 hours of unpaid community service, to be served within 12 months. He was also ordered to pay £20,428.73 in costs.

HSE principal inspector John Heslop said: “Too many workers are injured or die every year as a result of falling through fragile rooflights without adequate fall prevention or protection measures in place.

“These were both shocking incidents, which had a lasting impact on those who were injured.

“The law is clear about the measures needed to ensure safety when working on fragile roofs and there is a wide range of guidance available from HSE and the Construction industry on correct ways of working. HSE will not hesitate to take action against employers who do not do all that they should to keep people safe.”

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.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.