

Suspended sentence for South East scaffolder following unsafe work

A Kent-based scaffolder has been sentenced after unsafe working practices were observed during the erection of scaffolding.

Medway Magistrates' Court heard how, on 19 August 2016, Mr Steven David Connolly was working at a site in Chartham, Kent when an inspector observed him employing unsafe working practices when erecting scaffolding.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Mr Connolly was working unsafely and putting himself at serious risk of falling from the scaffold under construction. He ignored interjections of a HSE inspector, refusing to work safely and instead subjecting her to a torrent of abuse. Mr Connolly then left the scaffold in an unsafe and incomplete condition with no warning for subsequent users.

Mr Steven David Connolly of Greenacres, Lower Kingswood, Surrey pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 6(3) and 8(a) of The Work at Height Regulations 2005. He was sentenced to 24 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 18 months. He has also been subject to the condition of a curfew between 9am and 5pm at his home address for which he will be tagged and ordered to pay costs of £2,000.

After the hearing HSE inspector, Andrew Cousins said: "An already worrying situation was compounded by the defendant's unwarranted abuse of a public official and then leaving the scaffold in a perilous condition. He effectively obstructed the inspector in the exercise of her duty by his attitude, language and behaviour as well as his refusal to provide his identity or who he was working for.

"Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working. 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."

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. 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>