

# Two companies fined after man falls through roof of Salford skate park

Two companies have been fined more than £100,000 after a man fell 30 feet through a fragile skylight as he was working on a roof.

Nicolas Vilela suffered multiple injuries in the incident at Graystone Action Sports Centre, on Brunel Avenue in Salford on 23 November 2022.

Now 43, Mr Vilela had been fixing a solar panel into position on the roof when he took a step back and fell through one of the skylights to the skate park below, narrowly missing several people. His horrific injuries included a partial lung collapse, broken ribs, pelvis, femur and left wrist as well as fractures to lower vertebrae. He spent a month in hospital.



Overview of Graystone Action Sports Skatepark from viewing area

Falls from height remain a leading cause of workplace death and [HSE has published guidance](#) about how these incidents can be avoided.

Speaking as the companies were fined, Mr Vilela said the incident had affected him both physically and emotionally.

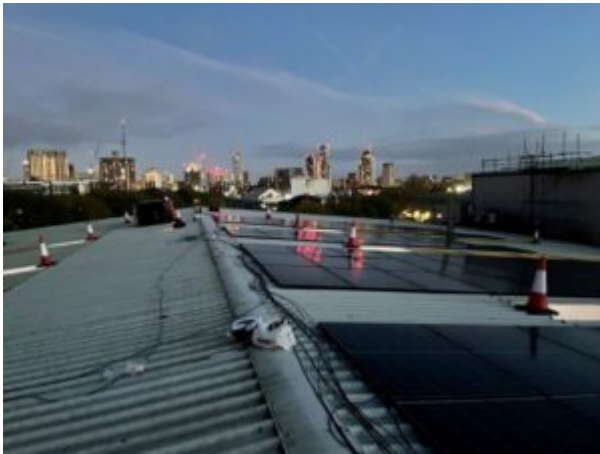
He said: “It has had an overwhelming and complicated impact on my life, having, until then, been a very active, dynamic person”

“A fall from a height of 10 metres is not something you survive.

“I broke my femur, pelvis, wrist, vertebrae and ribs. A lot worse could have happened but I am grateful for the fact that I am alive and can walk, but I will live with this trauma for the rest of my life.

“I have developed a fear of heights and a fear of any physical activity that could cause me harm. I am also really worried about how my body will respond in old age as a result of these injuries.

“I am unable to walk for more than a kilometre without feeling pain and getting very tired due to the loss of strength and mobility in my leg. My pelvic fracture impedes me from doing any heavy lifting and I live in fear of damaging it even more.”



Cones used to mark out location of fragile skylights

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that H2O Renewables Limited (H2O) were the principal contractor engaged for work to install solar panels to the roof of the indoor skate park and had engaged Green Projects Ltd (GPL) as sub-contractor to fit the roof mounted system. H2O planned the work during which time they were aware of multiple fragile rooflights in close proximity to where the solar panels would be fitted.

The risk assessment produced by H2O stated cones and warning tape would be used as a control measure to warn operatives of the risk of falling through the fragile roof lights, and fixed scaffolding would be used to prevent risk of falls from the perimeter of the roof. By the time the work started on 22 November 2022, the fixed scaffold had only partially been erected, and only the cones had been placed next to the skylights.

Despite the insufficient control measures being present to mitigate the risks from work at height, GPL's operatives were allowed to start work to fit the solar panels.

The investigation also found that H2O Renewables Limited and Green Projects Ltd, had failed to take suitable and sufficient precautions to ensure the safety of workers on the roof. Both companies had also failed to put in place a safe system of work for the installation of solar panels that were to be fitted in close proximity to many of the fragile roof lights present.



Skylight injured person  
fell through

H20 Renewables Limited of Hazel Grove, Stockport, pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. They were fined £106,720 and ordered to pay £40,995 costs at a hearing at Manchester Magistrates Court on 20 November 2024.

At the same hearing, Green Projects Ltd of Albert Street, Oldham, pleaded guilty to breaching regulations 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. They were fined £13,340 and ordered to pay £1,600 costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Phil Redman said: "This was a very serious incident that Mr Vilela was extremely lucky to survive.

"A fall from this distance frequently results in life-changing injuries or death.

"It is a timely reminder that all work at height activities must be suitably planned, managed and monitored using a safe system of work."

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Kate Harney and paralegal officer Rebecca Withell.

#### **Notes to editors:**

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice

to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).

5. Guidance on [working safely at height](#) is available.