

West Midlands companies sentenced after worker suffers life-changing injury

Two companies have today been fined after a contractor suffered permanent damage to his eyesight following a fall.

Dudley Magistrates' Court heard how, on 12 April 2016, a contractor, who worked for Kingswinford Engineering Co Limited, had been hired to repair a section of pipework on the roof of a warehouse owned by James Durrans & Sons' when he slipped and fell, banging his head. The worker has suffered permanent blindness to one eye and blurred vision in the other resulting from his head injury.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found multiple failings in relation to how the work, specifically access to the roof, was planned, managed and monitored. In particular neither company had undertaken a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, nor had they agreed a safe system of work for the repair of the pipework which required access to the roof.

Kingswinford Engineering Co Limited of Shaw Road, Dudley pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and has been fined £18,000 and ordered to pay costs of £9,000.

James Durrans & Sons Limited of Anchor Road, Bilston pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and has been fined £100,000 and ordered to pay costs of £20,000.

Speaking after the case, HSE inspector Edward Fryer commented:

"This incident highlights the need for contractors to be managed properly. Both the contractors and those engaging them must assess the risks of the site and the specific work to ensure it can be done safely. In this case, no risk assessment was carried out and arrangements made to access the roof put workers at significant risk of falling from height leading to this worker suffering a life-changing injury."

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>

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