

Safetyform Monthly Newsletter - October 2019



Welcome to the latest edition of the Safetyform monthly newsletter, bringing you up to date with all the latest construction health & safety stories.

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MD Group Signs up for 2 years



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After an initial project MD Group have appointed Safetyform as their new H&S consultants to assist the companies continued growth Zoe Hewer, Director of Safetyform commented, "these are exciting times for Safetyform and we are delighted to be able to provide key services to such a highly driven and motivated client. We will bring fresh ideas and investment to the role of H&S and ensure we support MD Group in complying with their duties". Safetyform have already commenced work on MD Group projects. Should you require any H&S services from Safetyform you can contact them on: Tel: 02922 677182 Email: info@safetyform.co.uk Web: www.safetyform.co.uk

Safetyform welcome Garry Baxter into the fold



We are excited to welcome Garry into the Safetyform family. Garry comes with a wealth of knowledge in the Facilities management sector recently at the London Stadium with West Ham United. We know Garry is going to be a valuable member of the team for years to come

"I am looking forward to learning and developing my skills in the field of H&S with Safetyform and I am excited to be joining a great company"

What's in the News?

Contractor fined after worker falls through unprotected stairwell



A principal contractor has been prosecuted after a worker suffered a serious injury when he fell approximately three metres through an unprotected stairwell opening.

Folkestone Magistrates' Court heard that on 17 August 2017, a sub-contractor to Brown Construction Ltd. was laying bricks for the second storey of a new build house in Ash, Canterbury. There was an opening in the floor where the stairs were to be installed. The worker slipped and fell through the opening and landed on his feet shattering his left heel, which required surgery to repair. The investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that no measures had been taken to prevent workers from falling from height through the stairwell opening.

Brown Construction Ltd. of Ashford Road, Maidstone, pleaded guilty of a breach of Regulation 4 (1) of the Working at Height Regulations 2005 and fined £17,333.

Speaking following the hearing, HSE inspector Ross Carter commented: "In this case a worker suffered serious injuries which could have been avoided by taking simple measures, such as installing guardrails around the opening, to prevent workers falling from height."

"Duty holders should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards".

Company fined after boy falls from scaffold



Westdale Services Limited has today been sentenced after a 12-year-old boy slipped off a scaffold ladder, falling approximately 10 metres.

Cardiff Magistrates' Court heard how, on 6 May 2017, two boys were able to climb the rungs of a ladder within scaffolding erected by Westdale Services Limited at Southville Flats, St David's Road, Cwmbran, by placing their feet either side of a ladder guard that did not cover the rungs of the ladder. One boy climbed to the top platform of the scaffold and climbed the uppermost ladder to a height of approximately 10 metres. The ladder slipped, causing the boy to lose his balance and fall to the ground, causing life-changing injuries requiring multiple operations. The boy now has no bladder or bowel control and is only able to walk short distances due to being unstable on his feet.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the security arrangements for preventing access to the scaffolding, especially by children from a nearby school, were inadequate.

Westdale Services Limited of Doncaster Road, Askern, Doncaster pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and has been fined £160,000 and ordered to pay £22,310 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Michael Batt commented: "The death or injury of a child is particularly tragic and a lot of thought must go into securing construction sites. Children do not perceive danger as adults do. The potential for unauthorised access to construction sites must be carefully risk assessed and effective controls put in place.

"This incident could have been prevented by removal of the ladder completely or installing an appropriately sized ladder guard to cover the full width of the rungs."

Two companies fined after worker seriously injured by fall



Two companies have been fined after a landscape gardener suffered serious injuries following a fall.

Southwark Crown Court heard how, on 24 July 2013, a team of landscape gardeners were working on a traffic island at the Mayfair Car Park, Park Lane, London, when a member of the team, who was aged 29, stood on an unstable grille. The grille, which was not fixed into position, gave way and he fell 11 metres into the ventilation shaft underneath, suffering serious injuries to his back and ankle.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident, found the ventilation grilles should have been inspected and maintained in order to identify any movement of the grilles.

Bouwfonds European Real Estate Parking, of L-2346 Luxembourg, 20 rue de la Poste, Luxembourg, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 4(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and has been fined £16,000 and ordered to pay costs of £18,000.

Saba Infra UK, of Oak House, Reeds Crescent, Watford, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 4(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and has been fined £45,000 and ordered to pay costs of £40,000.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Kevin Shorten said: “This traumatic incident could have been prevented by simple building maintenance inspections.”

Working on unfamiliar construction sites requires good communication of site specific hazards by the Principal Contractor. Don't take safety for granted, assess the risks and communicate to those working on the site.

Roofing company fined after worker falls from height

A roofing company was sentenced today for safety breaches after a worker fell about three metres through a roof light and suffered a fractured pelvis and spinal injuries.

Leeds Magistrates court heard how, on 17 March 2016, a self-employed roofer, working for PNR Roofing and Building Services Limited (PNR), was on a roof laying wooden ‘lats’ and roofing felt, when he fell through a sky light that was covered with felt. PNR was subcontracted to carry out roof work at Globe Mills in Slaithwaite.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that whilst PNR initially provided air bags as a means of mitigating any falls by employees, the air bags had been moved to remove debris and the worker hit the floor instead.

PNR Roofing and Building Services Ltd of Park View, Shafton, Barnsley pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and has been fined £20,000 and ordered to pay £1,100 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Chris Tilley commented: “Falls from height through fragile surfaces and skylights 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.

“This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply adopting reasonably practicable safe working practices such as using netting instead of relying on fall bags”

Builder sentenced after putting workers at risk with unsafe working practices



A Salford building contractor has today been sentenced after exposing workers to danger of falls from height and exposure to silica dust.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how, in July 2018, whilst carrying out repointing work at a house in Altrincham, Kenneth Morris allowed his employees to work on unguarded platforms six metres in height. The workers were also not provided with adequate protection from silica dust during the removal of mortar.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) began investigating after receiving information from members of the public. During the investigation, it was found that Kenneth Morris had made a deliberate decision not to provide the correct scaffolding or means of dust capture in order to save money. Mr Morris had also failed to insure his employees against any injury or ill health sustained during the course of their work.

Kenneth Morris, trading as K & M Pointing of Basten Close, Salford pleaded guilty to breaches of Section 3 (1) And Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Section 1 (1) of the Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 and has received a 26 week prison sentence suspended for two years, 180 hours community service and ordered to pay £2,000 in costs.

After the hearing HSE inspector Matt Greenly said: "HSE receives thousands of concerns from members of the public each year and we investigate those which show serious risk. Corners must not be cut when dealing with employees' safety, such as working at height."

Working at height must be properly planned and carried out by trained and competent workers. When working at height, employers must provide the most appropriate work equipment to enable operatives to carry out their work safely.

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