

Dear Sir,

Re: Lucky Escape 5th Nov.

I don't know how Worthing council operate, but here in Scarborough we have to abide by chapter 8. When working on or near the public highway, safety zones have to be in place before any works can be carried out.

Questions, I would have thought should have been raised by this incident.

Why no safety zone?

Why work over a road which was obviously in use?

Where were pedestrians supposed to go?

Was the access platform LOLER'd?

Was the operator trained or Licensed?

I personally know companies that use unlicensed operators and un-LOLER'd machines and I wouldn't touch them with a barge pole no matter how cheap they are. Safety for all concerned is paramount and should not be put at risk, especially for financial reasons.

The operator on this occasion was extremely lucky and so was everyone around the area at the time. Who knows, this may have been a blessing. If this incident had not occurred then maybe there might have been a fatality later in the day.

Best regards, Shane Wakeford

**High Reaching Solutions
Specialist Access Platforms**

Mr Wakeford is referring to a report we carried on Vertikal.Net on November 5th, in which an operator was tipped from the bucket of his van mounted lift after it was struck by a double decker bus. The operator fell between four and six metres, but was reported to have been uninjured. A repeat of this story is carried on Page 59 - our training section.

Hello Leigh,

I wanted to tell you that, the reading of your magazine on lifting equipments, to me is a refreshing moment. It keeps me updated with the world I used to work for. Keep doing the good work.

Best regards

J.M.DUQUESNOIS

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FRANCE

Dear Sir,

I have just been reading a copy of Cranes & Access and spotted a report of a prosecution by the HSE of a company that I know. The case was bought after they were caught breaking almost every work at height rule in the book. I know the company and the job because I had earlier called on them and provided a quotation for the use of an aerial lift to do the job. Until now I was unaware that they had tried to do it without any access equipment and that they had been caught and prosecuted.

I have to say the fact that they tried to do it in such a way is incredible, I saw the job first hand and it would have been highly dangerous, they are lucky that neither of the two employees fell, it would certainly have been fatal.

Sadly there are just way too many examples such as this, while some might be due to ignorance of the access equipment that is now available, it is also true that some, such as this company choose to cut corners after having got a quotation and then considered it to be too expensive. I must say one thing that is heart warning is that the prosecution has cost him well over 10 times or more what our machine would have cost him. And our machine would have been tax deductible!

As an industry we need to remember that there are still a lot of people out there who are still ignorant of the benefits of using the right access equipment. By publishing cases such as this you are doing a great service. I am planning to copy this article and circulate it if that is OK with you.

This letter was actually phoned through and so paraphrases the reader's comments. It refers to an article published earlier this year in this magazine. We are choosing not to name the contributor or the case for legal reasons. The facts revealed would have had a significant impact on the level of the fine and even at this stage might have perjury implications.

Dear Sir,

The use of on-line auction sites to sell on stolen plant and machinery is a spiralling problem which requires immediate action, plant theft which costs the industry around £1 million a week - is rising sharply in the hire sector. The Hire Association Europe, (HAE) is now seeking discussions with on-line auction sites to work together to solve the problem.

Our members report a growing number of thefts and a rise in fraudulent activity, the theft of hire equipment or fraud committed to obtain hire items is viewed as a victimless crime, but that is far from the reality. Many hire businesses are small family-run enterprises and the losses faced can severely weaken the business or result in closure and loss of jobs.

Someone inevitably has to pay, whether it is the hire business, its customers or the local economy. Often unwittingly new purchasers buy the stolen equipment and end up out of pocket, so a growing list of individuals and businesses suffer from this crime.

The use of on-line auction sites to sell on the stolen plant and machinery is a particular concern for our members and we would welcome direct contact so we can work together to tackle this problem.

What can you do?

- Seek references for the seller from someone you know who has dealt with them before.
- Inspect the equipment before you buy.
- Purchasing from pub car parks, lay-bys or service stations should be avoided.
- View or buy it from the company or home address of the seller.
- Be suspicious of recently re-sprayed equipment.
- The remnants of a disarmed security device or hastily removed Tracker must always be treated with the utmost suspicion.
- Check the ignition has not been damaged.
- Look for any previous owner decals - if you find any, call them to make sure they have sold it (other identifying marks that may be researched are the engraved/welded asset numbers that would suggest a period spent with a hire company).
- Ask for documentation - receipts, service history.
- Larger plant may be registered as road legal with the DVLA so ask for the V5C.
- Request a company receipt which includes the seller's full address and VAT number.
- Don't pay cash.
- Be suspicious if the sale price is lower than the market value.
- Item must have its original identification plate and serial number.

Graham Arundell,
Managing director
HAE

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you over the recent picture of the two roofers in Lancashire in Ormskirk. I know this person and he has been in the roofing business for 25 years and is a well known good roofer in the area he lives. I think it is a disgrace that somebody could be allowed to put this up and ruin somebody's working life because they haven't got nothing better to do. The people from the pub were very impressed with the job. I am asking you to remove this or I will take this further to the police.

No name given,

This letter which came in the form of an email was the result of a Death Wish photo we published on Vertikal.Net. It showed two roofers working on a pub roof alongside the main road. The two were climbing a ladder onto a high roof while carrying stacks of tiles and then balancing their materials on the roof ridge. The pair did have a roof ladder on their van but had decided that they not need it on this job in spite of the steepness of the roof pitch. We did not name the roofer, nor was there anyway that he could be identified from the photo.

We replied that our aim was not to destroy peoples livelihood but that the roofer was breaking several Health & Safety rules, and that while the pub may have been happy, if one of the men had fallen and died the pub as contractor/developer could have been dragged into any legal case resulting from the accident. Furthermore there was no cordoning off below so a member of the public could also have been involved and finally by taking such shortcuts puts those roofers who take safety seriously at a disadvantage. We have checked the photos, which were taken and sent in by a reader, and have left them in place.

Letters to the editor:

Please send letters to the editor: Cranes&Access: PO Box 6998, Brackley NN13 5WY, UK. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. We also point out that letters are the personal views of our readers and not necessarily the views of the Vertikal Press Ltd or its staff.