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Fatal accident costs £400,000

Two companies were fined a total of £400,000 for health and safety breaches that led a Glasgow labourer to fall eight metres to his death from a scaffold loading platform in April 2007.

James Kelly, 50, was employed by Stirling Stone which was sub-contracted by Robertson Construction Central to carry out masonry work as part of an extension to the Glasgow Academy. The father-of-three had been putting up stonework when he fell. He was taken to the nearby Western Infirmary but was dead on arrival.

Stirling Stone and Robertson Construction were each fined £200,000 at Glasgow Sheriff Court, following a three-week trial in March.

Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) said that there was no safe system of work in place for loading materials onto the loading tower, nor any suitable assessment of the risks involved. The investigation also revealed that the loading tower did not have sufficient guard rails and toe boards and that neither company had ensured that the tower and access scaffolding was properly inspected on a regular basis.

Kelly had apparently leaned against

the single guardrail which was removable to allow telehandlers to place materials on the scaffold when it gave way, causing him to fall. A colleague said that it was not unusual for unqualified labourers to alter scaffolding, rather than wait for trained scaffolders to arrive.

John Shelton, HSE Inspector for Construction, said: "What happened to Mr Kelly was entirely preventable and would not have happened if the proper steps had been taken. Loading-up operations at scaffold loading towers are repeated on construction sites across Scotland probably thousands of times a day."

"There is no excuse for the contractors not to have agreed procedures as to how this work was to be done and ensure that this routine work was carried out safely. Where vital edge protection is removed temporarily to allow loading up to take place, steps must be taken to ensure persons cannot fall during that work."



CCTV captures unsafe work at height

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A Lincoln, UK-based company has been fined £2,000 plus £1,500 costs for working at height without any safety equipment after being caught on a CCTV camera.

Two men working for contractor Graham Nicholson Roofing of Lincoln were seen risking their lives on the roof of Cooperative Travel at the Lakeside Centre, Balderton, Nottinghamshire, on 16 June 2010.

The staff responsible for monitoring the CCTV cameras reported them to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after spotting them undertaking repairs to the roof immediately above the public entrance to the store. They were not using appropriate access equipment, there was no edge protection and neither was wearing a harness to prevent falls risking injury to themselves and shoppers at the Lakeside Centre.

The contractor pleaded guilty to breaching section 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

HSE inspector Stephen Farthing said: "Fortunately no one was injured on this occasion, but both employees and members of the public were at risk. This was a blatant disregard for health and safety which put both workers and members of the public in danger. Roofing work requires careful planning and assessment of the risks involved. In this case employees were working without the correct equipment to protect them from falls or to protect passers-by from falling material."

"Falls from height are the biggest cause of workplace deaths and it's crucial that employers make sure work is properly planned, appropriately supervised and that sufficient measures are put in place to protect staff and members of the public from the risks."



Lack of training caused fatal accident

Anthony Milani, a 26 year old loader crane operator of Newbury, UK died when the crane he was using touched overhead power cables at West Horton Farm Industrial Estate, near Eastleigh on August 14th 2007. He was employed by Blackford (Newbury) Ltd, of Hambridge Road, Newbury, formerly Harris Roofing Supplies, which pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Milani had been employed as an HGV driver and warehouseman just four months before the accident. He was shown how to use the loader crane by the senior warehouseman who was not a competent trainer. Milani and the warehouseman had visited the

West Horton site prior to the accident and Milani had operated the crane without incident. While the warehouseman was aware of the overhead electric cables at the site, he said he did not consider them to be a hazard and was unaware of health and safety guidance about overhead power lines or the necessary training of crane drivers.

Signs warning of overhead cables had been removed several weeks earlier by the site owners. On the day he died, Milani - who was delivering roofing materials to the premises of SBM on his own - parked directly underneath the three overhead 11Kv cables. He then set only the nearside stabiliser when both sides should have been used and after unloading two pallets he telescoped the boom towards the rear of the truck and struck the cables. He was killed instantly. Since the accident Blackford has gone into administration and there is little to no likelihood that any fine will be paid since the company's assets have already been sold.

HSE inspector Dennis MacWilliam said: "Proper training, simple checks and procedures could have prevented this horrific incident. Tragically, Mr Milani had been booked-in to do a professional course in handling lorry mounted cranes in the month he died. The company failed to provide suitable and sufficient training and supervision in the use of loader cranes and the risk from overhead power lines. They also failed to ensure lifting operations were properly planned and hazards identified."



Who trained him then?

This example was sent in by a reader who failed to say when and where it occurred, but clearly this man needs some training on what is safe and what is sheer lunacy.

