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All training centres above offer IPAF/PASMA approved and audited courses. European directives require that all staff are fully and adequately trained in the safe use of the equipment they operate.



Barnes blatantly disregarding safe work practices

Upstream without a Paddle

Blackburn-based building constructor Paddle and its director Derek Hugh Barnes have been fined nearly £90,000 plus costs of £22,000 after being prosecuted following two serious incidents at a new-build development in South Wales, UK.

The first incident occurred in August 2011 when self-employed bricklayer Daniel King fell approximately four metres from a poorly constructed scaffold injuring his back and left foot. After investigating the Health & Safety Executive found no evidence to suggest that the scaffold had been designed, erected and inspected by a competent person and stated that it was overloaded and posing a clear fall risk. Six months later in March 2012 a concerned passer-by sent the HSE a photograph showing director Barnes overseeing a contractor working at height from the elevated bucket of an excavator. Both incidents occurred at the same site at Cae Canol, Baglan.

Swansea Crown Court handed Barnes an eight month suspended sentence, disqualified him from acting as a company director for three years and fined him £32,000 plus £11,000 costs. His company, following a long history of HSE enforcement action and a number of prohibition notices for unsafe work at height, was also fined a total of £56,000 and ordered to pay £11,000 in costs.

HSE inspector Phil Nicolle said: "Paddle Ltd and Derek Barnes have, over the years, shown a blatant disregard for health and safety management on their construction sites. Worker safety was clearly compromised on both occasions and the failings we identified are textbook examples of why falls from height remain such a common problem in the construction industry. Companies and directors have clear duties of care and safety responsibilities, and it is vital they properly assess, manage and supervise all work activity to mitigate risks at all times."

My future my choice



The educational charity at this year's Vertical Days

Can our industry sector do more to inspire and encourage young people into engineering? Educational charity My Future My Choice believes we can and through several projects and activities it hopes to bring young people and the engineering industry together. With its project Lifting Aspirations, which intends to apply science taught at schools in a workplace context, it has set out to provide a solution for businesses which are willing to allocate staff time, equipment or funding to engage young people.

The charity has been set up specifically for the purpose of bringing people who are not teachers together with young people in order to explore principles of pneumatics, hydraulics, gears and pulleys as well as the life style opportunities available through hard work in the lifting and access industry sector. It hopes to make it both fun and easy for volunteers and youngsters to work together, constructing, operating and competing with lifting devices.

My Future is looking for support to help build, promote and develop the Lifting Aspirations programme. It is also in need of volunteers to visit schools, museums, science centres and is even looking for volunteers willing to support a programme of educational activities at next year's Vertical Days. If this is something you or your company thinks it can help with please get in contact Hugh Thomas at: hugh@myfuturemychoice.co.uk.

HSS opens training academy

UK's second largest access rental company HSS has opened a multi-million, purpose-built training academy in Reading which will enable the company to deliver a wide range of training as well as both personal and professional development for its staff.

New employees will receive six weeks residential training at the academy, followed by a further six weeks practical training at their local distribution centre. Existing employees will attend a two week residential refresher course to develop customer service skills and product knowledge. The academy will also be used

to support the company's long-term National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and City & Guilds apprenticeship programmes of which a total of 60 apprentices are currently in training. HSS's chief executive Chris Davies said: "The core purpose of the Academy is to ensure HSS continues to invest in the career progression of young adults as well as more seasoned colleagues and managers."



The inauguration of HSS' new training academy

Who trained him then?

Spotted in Constanta, Romania, a man standing on the top frame of a scaffold precariously resting on a narrow kerb and a small pile of bricks.

