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Unsafe work at height costs £52,800 + community service

Exquisite Solutions (Alsager) of Salford, UK, was fined £42,500 plus costs of £5,200 while Company director Ali Wit Wit was given a community order for 270 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay costs of £5,100.

The HSE was alerted after men were spotted working on the roof of the building in Manchester between January and February 2019, with no safety measures in place. The HSE carried out two visits to site, on the second occasion employees were found working on the roof with nothing to prevent falls. The Inspectors intervened and stopped the work. HSE inspector David Norton said: "The HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against companies that fall below the required standards and endanger their employees."

£21k for fatal fall

Peter Saunders Builders of Cambridge, UK, was fined £16,000 plus £5,140 costs, following the fatal fall of an employee in September 2017. Sean Harding was working from a mobile scaffold tower levelling a steel beam over a door. He was using a crowbar to raise the beam so that a colleague could insert packing into the gap. Harding caught his jacket sleeve on the tower, lost his balance and fell over the single guard rail to the ground. He was taken to hospital but died three months later from complications resulting from the fall.

An investigation by Health and Safety Executive found that the mobile tower was not configured correctly due to the limited headroom, but double guard rails could have been used, had it been set up correctly. HSE inspector Stephen Hartley said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to select access equipment that is suitable for the task and the work environment and ensure that it is safely used."

ARA rental scholarships

The American Rental Association (ARA) Foundation is to make \$128,500 available for scholarships in the 2022-2023 academic year in an effort to attract talent into the rental industry. The 66 scholarships worth between \$750 and \$5,000 will be available for students seeking higher education through trade schools, universities, and community colleges. Applicants must be associated with the equipment and event rental industry, either as a student member of ARA or with a rental company, manufacturer or supplier of rental equipment and pursuing a career that supports the industry.

Applications are being accepted until March 7th at www.ARArental.org/ARA-Foundation/scholarships.



Loader crane incident costs £427k

Northumbrian Water has been fined £365,000 plus costs of £14,480, while contractor JW Colpitts & Co of Blyth was fined £30,000 plus costs of £17,572 after an employee's leg was crushed by a 1.5 tonne valve in June 2018. Northumbrian Water had contracted Colpitts to install the submersible discharge valve in a deep chamber at the Kielder Reservoir in Northumberland. The valve was lifted by a loader crane from outside of the chamber. The man was struggling to install the bolts on the valve, the crane operator was instructed to raise and lower it when the valve caught his leg. He sustained an open compound fracture of his tibia and fibula and was airlifted to hospital.

An investigation found that both companies had failed to risk assess the work or the additional hazards introduced by a change in the scope of work. They failed to implement suitable safety measures and safe systems of work or provide adequate supervision.

HSE inspector Clare Maltby said: "Companies must understand that work activities involving confined spaces, work at height and lifting operations must be subject to a robust risk assessment. Furthermore, risk assessments should be reviewed if the scope of work changes and additional hazards are introduced.

Companies must also ensure that they have suitable safety control measures and safe systems of work in place to address the identified risks. Appropriate arrangements should be in place to supervise and monitor work."



Who trained them?



Spotted just before Christmas, three men repairing damage to the roof of St John's Church in Tralee, Ireland, following Storm Barra. To reach the roof they combined a telehandler fitted with a material bucket with two long ladders - right in the middle of the busy town centre!