Health & Safety Bulletin

SUBJECT: What goes up must come down!

RECIPIENTS: All Council Services (including schools)

ISSUE DATE: April 2019 **REF:** HSB 141

Fall from height results in £1.8m fine for manufacturing firm

A food manufacturer has been sentenced after two workers were seriously injured when they fell over 4m through a roof light. Leeds Magistrates' Court was told the two employees of the firm were investigating a leak from the roof at the site, which the workers did not realise contained several roof lights. The workers were walking closely together and both stood on the same roof light which consequently fell through due to the weight.

One worker suffered four fractured ribs, a punctured lung, and muscular contusions to his outer right thigh. The other suffered a fractured skull, muscular injuries to his right leg and injuries inside his ear which cause ongoing problems with his balance, memory and mental health.

The HSE's investigation found the roof was made of asbestos cement and had several rooflights situated along it but they were not visible due to the build-up of moss and dirt which had accumulated over the years. Employees had also not been made aware of them.

The firm pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £1,866,000 and ordered to pay costs of £8,019.

After the hearing, the HSE inspector commented: "This was a wholly avoidable incident, caused by the failure of the company to provide adequate controls against the risks arising from working at height.

"Consideration of roof fragility and rooflights, visible or not, should be made, especially on older buildings."

Further info

Lincs2Learn – Working at Height E-learning Course.

G36- Working at Height

HSE - Working at Height Webpage

If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:

Corporate Health & Safety Advisers (see George section: Corporate > Information for Working > Risk Management > H&S Advisers)

Lincolnshire COUNTY COUNCIL

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