

THE SAFETY TIMES

Your monthly health and safety newsletter



MD JAILED FOR MANSLAUGHTER OF 20 YEAR OLD ROOF WORKER

The Managing Director of roofing firm IC Roofing Ltd has been jailed for 12 months after one of his employees fell to his death through a skylight.

The court heard that the deceased Darren Hoofe, 20 and two colleagues were replacing roof lights at industrial premises in Uckfield, East Sussex. The roof

was extremely fragile as it was made from asbestos cement. While carrying out repairs Mr Hoofe fell through one of the skylights to the ground, approximately 25 metres below. He sustained head injuries from which he died in hospital the next day.

The HSE inspector stated "There were no safety measures in place to protect the men from falling. The men were only supplied with 2 crawling boards when they would actually have needed about 11 to do the job safely. There was no netting underneath the roof to catch them if they fell and only 2 harnesses supplied but no evidence these had been used."

The HSE issued the firm with a Prohibition Notice, ordering it to cease work until a safe system of work was in place. The Managing Director had received a similar notice in 2000 for failing to provide a safe number of crawling boards for work on an asbestos roof.

In addition to his sentence the Managing Director was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay £20,000 costs from breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. He was also banned from being Director of a company for three years.

MAN CRUSHED TO DEATH BY FALLING SLABS

Employee, Jerzy Pejda was crushed to death while unloading a delivery of tiles and granite stone slabs from a shipping container at the Stoneville yard in Hounslow, West London. The load became unstable and fell, trapping Mr Pejda.

The other workers attempted to free him, but were unable to do so and Mr Pejda was pronounced dead at the scene.

Stoneville (UK) was fined £4,000 and ordered to pay £2,000 in costs at the Old Bailey after admitting breaching health and safety laws.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to conduct a risk assessment, which would have helped provide a plan for the unloading of the container in such a way that risks to employees were controlled.


HSE inspector Owen Yorath said: "The death of Mr Pejda was the tragic result of a failure to take practicable precautions to control the risks associated with the unloading of vehicles. Employers must learn from this tragedy that it is essential that companies carry out a risk assessment for the loading and unloading of workplace transport.

Companies must also make sure the staff and management are properly trained and adhere to the risk assessment, to avoid such fatalities.



FOCUS ON...

Fire Extinguishers on Vehicles Carrying Dangerous Goods



From the 1st January 2008 all ADR* vehicles over 7.5 tonnes were required to carry extra fire extinguisher capacity up to a total minimum of 12kg dry powder (or equivalent). This is up from the previous total of 8kg. These vehicles must have a minimum of a 2kg in cab extinguisher which counts toward the total load space extinguisher capacity of 12kg. One extinguisher must be at least 6kg.

To meet the requirements qualifying ADR vehicles can install a single 9Kg Dry Powder extinguisher in a front or top loading Vehicle cabinet and employ a 4Kg Dry powder or 2 x 2Kg equivalent Class A,B,C extinguishers mounted in the cab.

For older vehicles which currently have 2Kg cab extinguishers the ADR

requirements are likely to require installing a further vehicle cabinet and 4 or 6 Kg dry powder extinguisher to meet the 12Kg capacity.

The fire extinguishers have to be installed on the transport units in such a way that (i) the crew can get to them easily: and (ii) their operational safety is not affected by the weather.

The ADR extinguisher capacity for vehicles 3 tonnes to 7.5 tonnes is 8Kg and below 3 tonnes 4Kg

Other requirements of the legislation require vehicles to carry up to two Vehicle Hazard Warning "Triangle", high visibility vest and flashlights for each member of the crew.

*"ADR" is the acronym for "Accord European Relatif au Transports International des Marchandises Dangereuses par Route".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cost of slips, trips and falls

New figures released by the HSE reveal that 61 people died and more than 14000 suffered injuries as a result of a slip, trip or fall from height at work in Britain last year.

The cost to British society of these incidents is estimated to amount to £700 million.

In response to its findings the HSE has re-launched its campaign aimed at raising awareness of these kinds of accidents. The Shattered Lives campaign is targeting the industries where these accidents are most common – food and drink manufacturing, building and plant maintenance, construction, food retail, catering and hospitality, health care and education.

Carbon monoxide – know the risks

Last month a 16-year-old girl died and another teenager was found close to death in a fish and chip shop in Bexleyheath, south-east London. It is alleged they both slept above the shop the night before and by that both victims suffered carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels, including gas, oil, wood and coal. When CO enters the body, it prevents the blood from bringing oxygen to cells, tissues, and organs.

You can't see it, taste it or smell it but CO can kill quickly without warning.

According to the HSE statistics around 20 people a year die from CO poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues that have not been properly installed, maintained or that are poorly ventilated. Levels that do not kill can cause serious harm to health if breathed in over a long period. In extreme cases paralysis and brain damage can be caused as a result of prolonged exposure to CO.

Early symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning can mimic many common ailments and may easily be confused with food poisoning, viral infections, flu or simple tiredness.

How do I know if I am at risk from carbon monoxide?

Although carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas, signs that indicate incomplete combustion is occurring, resulting in

the production of CO, include:

- Yellow or orange rather than blue flames (apart from fuel effect fires or flueless appliances which display this colour flame)
- Soot or yellow/brown staining around or on appliances
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out
- Increased condensation inside windows

As an employer, how do I ensure my workplace is safe without risk from carbon monoxide poisoning?

Ensure that any work carried out in relation to gas appliances is undertaken by a CORGI-registered installer. In addition the HSE strongly advises that gas appliances and/or flues are serviced regularly e.g. annually by a CORGI-registered engineer.