

Don't let a fall shatter your life

Since 2001, an average of 50 people in Great Britain have died each year as a result of a fall from height and a further 8,700 are seriously injured. Don't let a fall shatter your life!

The Work at Height Regulations aim to prevent deaths and injuries caused each year by falls at work. They apply to all work at height where it is likely someone will be injured if they fall.

The regulations set out three simple rules for work at height:

-AVOID work at height if you can - If you don't need to go up there, don't!!

-If work at height cannot be avoided **PREVENT** falls by selecting and using the right access equipment

-MINIMISE the impact of any fall. Where you cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other means to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall, should one occur.

Any work at height MUST; be kept to a minimum, be properly planned, be appropriately supervised. Be carried out by someone who is trained and competent and able to complete the task safely. The competent person must be able to erect, use, dismantle or operate as appropriate the selected access equipment. Do not attempt to carry out any work at height in unsuitable weather conditions (eg wind, rain or ice!)

If you are going to work at height you should be trained and competent, and be able to;

- complete the task safely
- erect/use/dismantle or operate as appropriate the selected access equipment

If you are still being trained you should be supervised by a fully trained and competent person. More information can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/wait/index.htm>



Shell worker receives £77,000 for pleural thickening

A former employee of Shell Chemicals (UK) has received more than **£77,000** in an out of court settlement after he developed a serious lung condition following asbestos exposure.

The 62-year-old from Manchester worked as a plant operator at Shell's Carrington site between 1979 and 1986 where he often had to remove asbestos insulation from pipe work as part of routine maintenance work. No one warned him about the dangers to his health and Shell did not provide him with any protection.

He was diagnosed with asbestos-related pleural thickening in 2008, which left him breathless and forced him to give up his job working in an airport car parking service.

"My condition has become so bad I can no longer work and cannot do any of the DIY jobs I used to enjoy around the house," he said.

Pleural thickening can occur when asbestos fibres make their way to the pleura the two layered membrane surrounding the lungs, causing scarring and thickening. If the areas of thickening are isolated to small areas, they do not generally cause any symptoms and are known as pleural plaques; if they cover a large area where they may make breathing difficult, they are known as diffuse pleural thickening. There is also an increased chance that sufferers will go on to develop other asbestos-related diseases such as the cancer Mesothelioma.

"The claim against Shell was vigorously defended but I was able to obtain supportive evidence from numerous witnesses who worked alongside our client," said Steven Dickens from Thompsons Solicitors.

"The settlement included a court order which protects the client's right to reopen his case and claim further compensation if at any time in the future he suffers serious deterioration due to asbestos related disease."

Pub landlord ignored fire brigade notice

Sixteen breaches of the Fire Safety Order, including one of failing to comply with a Prohibition Notice, have cost former pub landlord Bhupinder Singh Mann **£16,015 in penalties**.

When London Fire Brigade (LFB) officers inspected the Star Public House in Hillingdon in August 2008, they found a wide range of problems including no fire extinguishers, emergency signage or fire risk assessment. During subsequent visits there was little improvement, so officers issued an enforcement notice detailing what needed to be rectified. But when they inspected the premises again, the situation had deteriorated to the extent that the brigade decided to serve a Prohibition Notice on 20 February 2009 preventing staff or guests from using the upper floors. The pub ignored this notice and a further visit confirmed that people were still using the upper floors as accommodation.

On 22 May 2009, the owner of the premises Punch Taverns physically barred access to the upper floors on the advice of fire officers on site. Mann admitted 16 charges, including one of failing to comply with a prohibition notice and seven of not complying with an enforcement notice. At Isleworth Crown Court on 26 February, he was **fined £8015** and ordered to pay £8000 costs. In December 2009, Uxbridge magistrates ordered the Star's manager Bales-Smith to pay £1015 in fines and costs after he pleaded guilty to two breaches of the Fire Safety Order. LFB took no action against Punch Taverns.



No edge protection costs company that “employed” a sub contractor £14000!



A company that allowed sub contractors to install new guttering on its roof without the appropriate edge protection has been ordered to pay a **£14,777** penalty. Cobham Advanced Composites contracted Streamline Guttering and Cladding to carry out work on its seven-metre-high building roof in December 2008, but **failed to check** that the firm had alleviated the risk of a fall. Three workers accessed the roof from the front of the building using a mobile tower scaffold but there was no edge protection provided at the rear where they were replacing the guttering. “There was a foreseeable risk of a fall through either fragile roof lights or from the unprotected edge of the building,” said HSE inspector Mhairi Lockwood. “This case shows that it is not only the responsibility of the **contracted** company to ensure the safety of the workforce, but it is also that of the **client.**” Cobham Advanced Composites admitted failing to ensure its **contractors’** safety, contrary to Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Loughborough magistrates fined the company £10,000 with £4777 costs. At an **earlier hearing**, Streamline Guttering was fined **£4950** after it pleaded guilty to three offences under the Work at Height Regulations.

Unguarded drilling machine at Midlands manufacturer

Solihull magistrates fined Thor Hammer Company Ltd £2500 with £2594 in costs after admitting breaching R.11 (1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 in respect of a machine unprotected drilling pedestal in its premises Shirley.



An employee was operating the machine when the glove on his right hand became entangled in one of the axes of rotation of the drill, inflicting wounds on the back of his hand and tearing his right palm.

The HSE said the company did not respond to a quote for £165 for mounting a guard, having been informed by the HSE of the need for one to be fitted.

Myth of the month

Myth: Risk assessment is too complicated for me to do!

The reality

Carrying out a risk assessment should be straightforward. It’s about focusing on real risks and hazards that cause real harm and, more importantly, taking action to control them.



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