STACS of News
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Labourer suffers spinal injuries after fall

A domestic house builder was fined after a labourer sustained serious spinal injuries when he fell one storey onto concrete through a stairwell opening.
It was only his second week on the job when the man stepped backwards and fell through an opening intended for a staircase that had not yet been installed. He was working as a temporary labourer for a scaffolding company at a site of four new domestic dwellings being constructed.
The stairwell opening had not been securely covered (previous loose scaffold boards had been removed) and the open edges were not protected. There were no alternative means of accessing the sub-floor and West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue had to rescue the victim, who had fallen unconscious. He sustained serious spinal injuries which prevented him from working for months after the incident and has not returned to a physical job since.
An HSE investigation found that the employer had failed to put adequate measures in place to prevent falls from height, resulting in the labourer falling through an unprotected stairwell opening and suffering life-changing injuries.
The employer was found guilty on three charges. They failed to properly plan and appropriately supervise work at height and to take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent a fall. The company was fined £300,000 and ordered to pay £9,284.05 in costs.

Members of public injured at scrap metal recycling company

A scrap metal recycling company has been fined after two members of the public were injured when a large pile of scrap metal collapsed onto them at its site in Scunthorpe.
A father and son were unloading scrap metal when a 360-degree excavator fitted with a grab attachment was operating nearby. As the machine removed material from a large stockpile of scrap metal a part of the pile collapsed, causing heavy pieces of scrap to fall onto the two. Both were taken to hospital following the incident and one sustained a broken leg.

An investigation by the HSE found that the excavator had been operating in close proximity to members of the public for around 20 minutes before the incident. The company had failed to put suitable controls in place to prevent members of the public from being exposed to the risks created by moving machinery and unstable stockpiles.

Following the incident, HSE served a Prohibition Notice preventing the excavator from operating close to pedestrians. The company subsequently introduced a separate area for public unloading, installed signage, implemented a supervised unloading system and developed a traffic management plan incorporating barriered walkways.
The company was sentenced after previously pleading guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £40,000 and must pay costs of £6,181.

Crate falls on delivery driver during unloading

A Hull business has been sentenced after safety breaches resulted in a 64-year-old employee sustaining life-changing injuries.
The court heard that the delivery man was delivering a large crate containing an electron microscope to a medical supplies company site. The delivery company had originally intended to provide a forklift truck and driver for the delivery. However, due to restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the medical supplies company sought to reduce the number of people on site and took responsibility for unloading the goods.
The task was not properly assessed, planned or supervised. As a result, the delivery driver was positioned unsafely and the load was lifted in an unsafe manner, causing the crate to fall from the forklift truck and land on him, resulting in life-changing injuries.
An investigation by the HSE found that the medical supplies company had failed to adequately plan the unloading operation. There was no assessment of the suitability of the company's two-tonne forklift truck in relation to the characteristics of the load. The company also failed to consider how the lift should be carried out, who should be involved and what precautions were necessary. The unloading operation was not meaningfully controlled or supervised.
The medical supplies company was found guilty of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £230,000 and ordered to pay £111,000 in costs.

Trench collapse causes death

Two companies and a self-employed contracts manager have been sentenced after a worker was crushed to death when an unsupported trench collapsed at a site in Surrey.
A 33-year-old man had been working to replace a damaged pipe at the bottom of the deep trench, which had been dug with a three-tonne digger. He had been clearing soil with a shovel and a pickaxe when, without warning, the trench walls collapsed. Although rescue attempts were made, he was buried in approximately 2 tonnes of soil and sadly died at the scene.
A joint investigation by Surrey Police and the HSE over five years found there were no supports in the trench and excavated soil had been deposited immediately next to it. The investigation also found that a self-employed contracts manager had observed another worker in the same unsupported excavation earlier that day. Despite being aware of the measures required to prevent a trench collapse, he failed to ensure they were in place.
Following a trial, the principal contractor and a subcontractor were convicted of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
The subcontractor was fined £650,000 and ordered to pay costs of £40,000.
The Principal Contractor was fined £500,000.
The self-employed contracts manager working for the subcontractor, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 by failing to take reasonable care for the health and safety of others who may have been affected by his acts or omissions at work.
He was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, and ordered to complete 150 hours of unpaid work.

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