
Mifflin Construction Fined Â£120,000 for Health and Safety Breach

Description

On March 4, 2024, Mifflin Construction Limited was found guilty of breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Section 2(1), and was fined Â£120,000. The case was heard at Kidderminster Magistrates' Court, where the company pleaded guilty to the charges. This article delves into the details of the case, the parties involved, and the implications of the verdict.

Background

Mifflin Construction Limited, based in Leominster, Herefordshire, is a company that manufactures and installs steel components for the construction industry. The incident that led to the court case occurred in May 2019, when a tragic accident resulted in the death of a long-time employee, Steve Rooke.

The Incident

- **Date:** May 2019
- **Location:** Mifflin Construction Ltd, Leominster, Herefordshire
- **Victim:** Steve Rooke, 55 years old, an employee of over 27 years

Steve Rooke was working in the workshop, using an overhead travelling crane to lift a heavy steel beam. The beam, which was 18 meters long and weighed 1,800 kg, rotated in its sling, toppling sideways and trapping Steve against another beam. The accident caused fatal injuries.

Investigation Findings

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) conducted an investigation into the incident and found several critical failings on the part of Mifflin Construction Limited:

- **Risk Assessment:** The company failed to ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment was conducted by a competent person.
- **Training and Information:** Employees were not provided with adequate information, instruction, and training about lifting operations.
- **Planning and Supervision:** The company did not properly plan lifts and lacked a system for ensuring adequately qualified supervisors were present during lifting operations.

Court Proceedings

- **Date:** March 4, 2024
- **Court:** Kidderminster Magistrates' Court
- **Charges:** Breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- **Verdict:** Guilty
- **Fine:** Â£120,000
- **Additional Costs:** Â£50,000

During the court proceedings, Mifflin Construction Limited pleaded guilty to the charges. The court imposed a fine of £120,000 and ordered the company to pay additional costs of £50,000.

Reactions and Statements

- **Karen Rooke:** Steve's wife expressed her grief and the impact of the incident on their family. She stated, "Steve's death has left a big hole in our lives. How can you move on when something like this has happened? It's changed everything, every plan we had has gone and our future is cancelled."
- **HSE Inspector Steve Richardson:** Speaking after the hearing, he said, "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices. Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

Conclusion

The case of Mifflin Construction Limited serves as a stark reminder of the importance of adhering to health and safety regulations in the workplace. The tragic loss of Steve Rooke highlights the need for companies to conduct thorough risk assessments, provide adequate training, and ensure proper planning and supervision of all operations. The substantial fine imposed on Mifflin Construction Limited underscores the serious consequences of failing to meet these standards.

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