

Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited Fined Â£575,000 for Health and Safety Violations

Description

Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited, a prominent roofing company, has been fined Â£575,000 due to multiple health and safety violations that resulted in severe injuries to workers. The case, which was heard at Newcastle Crown Court on December 6, 2023, underscores the critical importance of adhering to safety regulations in the workplace. This article explores the details of the incidents, the parties involved, and the legal ramifications faced by the company.

Background

Incident 1: Newcastle Factory Roof

On November 11, 2019, Billy Hewitt, a 60-year-old worker from Whickham, experienced a catastrophic accident while working on a factory roof in Throckley, Newcastle upon Tyne. Hewitt was in the process of replacing a skylight when he plummeted seven meters through the roof, landing on the concrete floor below. The fall resulted in multiple severe injuries, including a fractured pelvis, left wrist, and eye socket. He spent three weeks in the hospital following the incident.

Reflecting on the accident, Hewitt shared the profound impact it had on his life: "You don't go to work in the morning and expect to end up in intensive care, but that's what happened to me. It's been four years since my accident, and I don't really do anything with my days. I really miss work. I was a roofer for 40 years, but this accident changed everything because I still can't work. I used to earn a good wage, but now I'm classed as 51% disabled and rely entirely on benefits."

Incident 2: Plasmarl Industrial Estate, Swansea

On June 3, 2019, a 24-year-old scaffold laborer employed by RM Scaffolding faced a similar ordeal. While crossing a fragile roof at Plasmarl Industrial Estate in Swansea, he fell through a skylight, plummeting approximately 20 feet below. This fall resulted in a fractured femur and a blood clot in one of his main arteries, necessitating long-term medical treatment.

Investigation and Findings

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) conducted thorough investigations into both incidents, revealing significant safety lapses. The investigation into the Newcastle incident concluded that Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited had failed to properly plan and execute the skylight replacement work. Specifically, the work at height had not been adequately assessed, and there were no safety nets directly underneath the skylight where the accident occurred.

In the Swansea incident, HSE found that Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited, acting as the principal contractor for the project, had not sufficiently planned, managed, or monitored the work conducted by RM

Scaffolding, the subcontractor. This lack of oversight led to unsafe work practices. Paul Robinson, a business partner at RM Scaffolding, also failed to plan the work adequately, ensure that staff had the necessary skills and knowledge, and provide the required fall protection on the roof.

Legal Consequences

Following a three-day sentencing hearing at Newcastle Crown Court on December 6, 2023, Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited was fined Â£575,000 and ordered to pay Â£84,940.08 in costs. The company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

Paul Robinson, the business partner at RM Scaffolding, was also prosecuted by HSE following the incident in Swansea. He was found guilty of failing to plan the work properly and ensure that staff had the appropriate skills, knowledge, and experience.

The case of Mitie Tilley Roofing Limited highlights the crucial importance of adhering to health and safety regulations in the workplace. The substantial fines and legal consequences faced by the company underscore the need for thorough planning, management, and monitoring of work activities to prevent accidents and ensure worker safety. Employers must take their responsibilities seriously to protect their employees and avoid similar incidents in the future.

CATEGORY

1. West Glamorgan

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