

In The Dock – Safety Failings Land Building Firms In Court

Stan England Builders Limited has been fined following an incident when a worker suffered serious injuries after falling from a mezzanine level and wooden platform.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court heard that on 31 March 2016, Alan Ness was working at a residential property in Banchory. He began taping areas on the ceiling of a mezzanine level. He gained access to this level by a wooden platform which had a ladder propped against it. As he was working close to the edge of the mezzanine level, he lost his footing and stumbled a drop of 18.5cm onto the wooden platform. He was unable to regain his footing and fell a further 2.5 metres head first onto the floor below. He sustained head, back and neck injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that there was no edge protection on the wooden platform and no safe system of work had been put in place. Mr Ness had received no formal training for work at height or working on ladders and he had a lack of knowledge and awareness of the hazards associated with work at height.

Stan England Builders had failed to supervise appropriately and had not corrected deficiencies and there was no written risk assessments for this task.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £6,000.

After the hearing, HSE inspec-

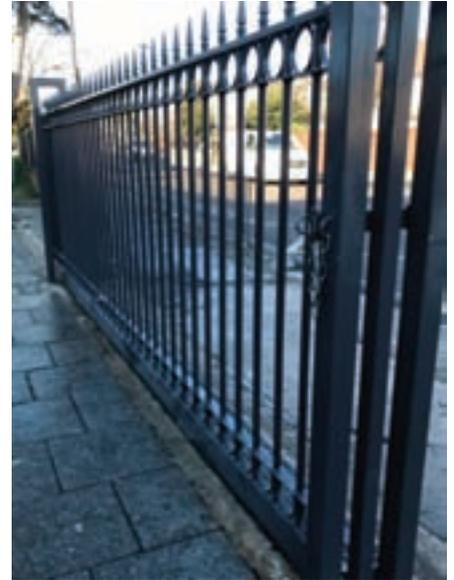
The Installer is a firm advocate of adhering to the best standards in Health & Safety. In this month's issue, we report on two cases in the domestic building and refurbishment market that have landed directors in court.

tor, Connor Gibson said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working. Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known. In this case a different and simple approach of using edge protection on the wooden platform could have prevented the life changing injuries sustained by the employee."

Surrey metal fabricator fined after girl crushed by steel gate at primary school

A manufacturer of bespoke gates has been fined after an eight-year-old girl was crushed by a steel gate at a London school.

Westminster Magistrates' Court heard that on 17 May 2018 the girl had been leaving an evening gymnastics club at the school in Streatham. When the sliding gate fell on her. She suffered multiple fractures to her pelvis as well as internal injuries.



The manual sliding gate, which is more than five metres long and 1.7 metres high, was designed, manufactured and fitted by Metalart Fabrication Limited.

However, an investigation by the HSE found that the mechanism in place to prevent the sliding gate from overrunning and falling over as it was opened (a small stop welded to its guiding rail) was insufficient if the gate was opened robustly.

Metalart Fabrication pleaded guilty to breaching Section 6(1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £19,327, including full costs of £1,147 and a victim surcharge of £180.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Sarah Whittle said: "The failure to fit suitable end-stops meant that the gate was an accident waiting to happen and could have fallen on anyone at any time with life threatening consequences." 