

Big fines follow roofer's agonising 10-metre fall

Fines totalling more than £300,000 have been handed down to contractors involved in the fall of a roofer who smashed up his leg.

Brian Robinson fell through the roof onto the factory floor.

Principal Contractor Weiser Construction Ltd and Complete Cladding Systems Ltd were both sentenced for safety breaches after the worker suffered life changing injuries.

Leeds Magistrates' Court heard how, on 4th January 2016, Brian Robinson was working as a sheet metal cladder at the Weiser Construction site at the John Cotton factory in Mirfield, West Yorkshire. He was on the roof, fixing sheet metal cladding and capping to the gable end of an adjoining building. While tying the cappings to the roof, Mr Robinson fell through a roof light, falling 9.7 metres into the active factory area below.

He suffered an open fracture to his femur and multiple fractures to his pelvis. He had to have six pins in his pelvis and four in his femur.

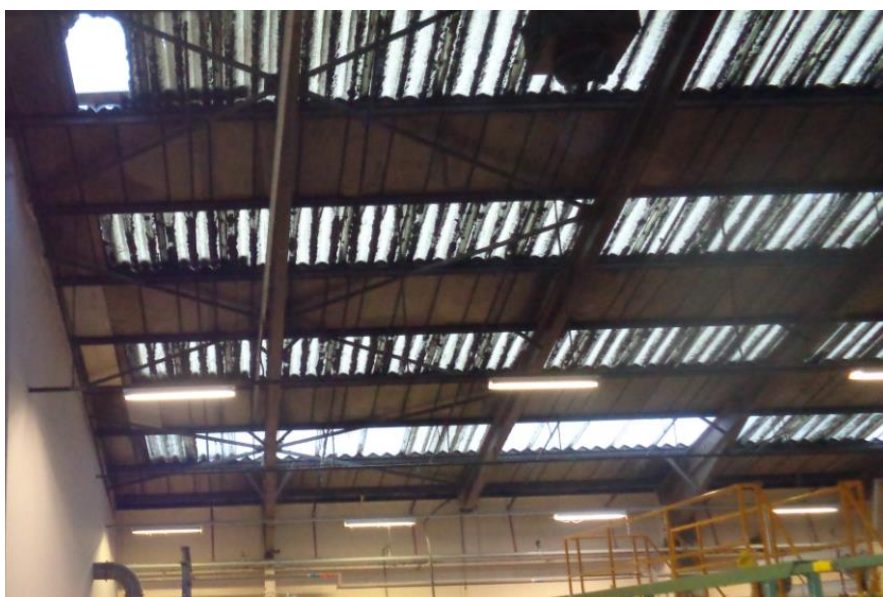
An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found that the original scaffold that had been constructed on the roof had been removed before cladding works were completed. Spandek boards with guardrails were the preferred control measure but use of these boards meant that workers could not affix the handrails in situ.

No nets had been scheduled to be used in the area of the factory and as Mr Robinson fell, the top half of his legs struck the top of a storage cage, approximately 2.4 metres high, before continuing his fall to the floor behind the storage cage.

Weiser Construction Ltd (now in liquidation) of Clark Business Recovery Ltd, York Place, Leeds pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. It was fined £145,000 with £5,046.30 costs.

Complete Cladding Systems Ltd of Newton Cap House, Toronto, Bishop Auckland pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1074. It was fined £165,000 with £5,114.49 costs.

HSE inspector Paul Thompson said after the hearing: *"Work at height, such as roof work, is a high-risk activity that accounts for a high proportion of workplace serious injuries and fatalities each year. This was a wholly avoidable incident, caused by the failure of the Principal Contractor to manage and monitor the works to ensure the correct work equipment was being used. This risk was further amplified by the cladding company's failure to ensure suitable measures were in place to prevent persons falling a distance liable to cause personal injury."*



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