

GLA fined after wall falls on man in front of family

The land and property arm of the Greater London Authority has been fined after a poorly maintained wall collapsed onto a man in front of his wife and two children.

Southwark Crown Court heard how on 25 January 2014, a family of four were hurrying along a pavement to Catford Station to shelter from a storm when a wall and a hoarding attached to it was blown onto the father, causing him to lose consciousness and end up hospitalised. The man, 45, suffered facial and skull injuries including a fractured eye socket and had to have a titanium plate inserted into his left cheek area. The whole family including the children, four and nine at the time, remain affected by the incident.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that GLA Land Property (GLAP) employed a company to manage and maintain this site. The investigation found that GLAP failed to oversee the contract properly, resulting in the wall not being maintained. The wall developed a crack which weakened, causing the hoarding to act like a sail in strong winds, eventually leading to its collapse.

GLA Land and Property of Broadway, London, pleaded guilty under Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined a total of £250,000 and ordered to pay £14,653 in costs.

HSE inspector Ian Shearring said: *“A set of simple arrangements to inspect and maintain the wall would have picked up on the imminent danger to any passer-by. Instead, a whole family was traumatised by seeing the father sustaining serious injuries from being struck by hoarding as it collapsed. It was only a matter of luck that no one was killed on the day outside a busy station.”*

