

LADDERS

The use of ladders on construction sites is attracting more and more attention from the Health and Safety Authority in a bid to reduce the number of accidents resulting from falls from heights.

The HSA's key message is that a ladder should only be used for low-risk, short-duration work. Ladders can be used if after assessing the risks the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the low risk and short duration. Short duration is taken to be up to 30 minutes depending upon the task.

Ladders can also be used for low risk work where there are features on the site that mean a ladder must be used.



TGP - POLAND

The Thomas Garland and Partners Group has recently formed a strategic alliance with, a leading Polish Firm of Consulting Engineers.

The move will see the group providing an extensive range of services from Warsaw including :

- Masterplanning
- Feasibility Studies
- Civil & Structural Design
- Health and Safety Services
- Site Supervision
- Project Management

Our Polish partner has an impressive and extensive portfolio of prestigious commercial, retail and residential developments in Poland and Austria.

Both practices have a common goal to provide our clients with an outstanding engineering consultancy service, which consistently excels in the delivery of economic, innovative and sustainable solutions.



SAFETY BY DESIGN

CLIENT FINED €100,000



Otis Cummins

Meath County Council has been fined €100,000 for failing to comply with the Safety Health and Welfare (Construction) Regulations 2001. The court found that Meath County Council failed to appoint a Project Supervisor Construction Stage and failed to draw up a safety and health plan for roadworks which were taking place at the time of the Kentstown bus crash.

Five schoolgirls who were passengers on the schoolbus lost their lives in the accident. Describing the event as entirely avoidable, he held that Bus Éireann bore most of the responsibility for the fact that the ABS brakes were not functioning properly. Judge Pat McCartan said he was satisfied that as Keltank (maintenance contractor) received its instructions from Bus Éireann in relation to the maintenance of the vehicle, the company was "so far removed" that it could not be held directly responsible for the deaths of the five schoolgirls. He said Keltank's failure was to address "an evident danger" when its staff noticed disconnected ABS cables on the under carriage of the bus. He said that if Meath County Council had appointed a Project Supervisor for Construction Stage and implemented a Health and Safety Plan, matters would not have been substantially different. The Council was, he said, "most removed from the tragedy".

Judge Pat McCartan noted that all three organisations co-operated fully with the investigation into the accident, pleaded guilty at an early opportunity and expressed remorse and regret at their failings. He imposed a fine of €2M on Bus Éireann, €100,000 on Keltank and €100,000 on Meath County Council. (DPP for H.S.A. v Bus Éireann, Keltank Limited Meath Mc Ardles Test Centre Limited and Meath Council: Dublin Circuit Criminal Court, June 2008)



SAFETY BY SERVICE

Services Include

- Project Supervisor Design Process
- Design and Construction Management Consultancy
- Safety Training for :
 - Designers
 - Clients
 - PSDP

TGP Safety Management

- Dublin :** Garland House, Rathmines Park, Dublin 6
Tel : 01 4964322 Fax: 01 4964725 email: mail@tgp.ie
- Limerick :** Riverfront, Howleys Quay, Limerick.
Tel : 061 319708 Fax: 061 313124 email : mail@tgp-limerick.com
- Waterford :** Suite 11B, The Atrium, Maritana Gate, Canada St., Waterford
Tel : 051 876511 Fax : 051 872274 email : mail@tgp-waterford.com



BRAIN DAMAGE

€1.2M

SETTLEMENT

A case by a building worker, who suffered brain damage when he fell 20 feet from a raised forklift platform, was settled in the high court recently. The injured worker alleged he had been instructed or allowed to use the forklift, which had not been fitted with any safety rail or cage when it was used to provide him with access to a conveyor belt. He claimed a suitable platform, such as a cherry picker, should have been provided.

The court heard that the injured worker was in a coma for almost a month after the accident, that he would require constant care and that his wife had given up her job to look after him. (*Lenagh v Martin Casey t/a JMC Engineering and Kilsaran Concrete: High Court, Dublin, July 2008*)

DIRECTOR JAILED 1 YEAR

The director of a construction company in the UK has been jailed after admitting the manslaughter of a Chinese construction worker who fell through a skylight on a site in Norfolk.

The worker fell to his death during work to refurbish and extend a bakery. He had been working on a flat roof when he stepped onto plastic sheeting which covered an opening in the roof. The openings were not protected or marked. He fell 4.6m and later died in hospital.

The prosecution told the court that no risk assessments were carried out and none of the workers spoke English.

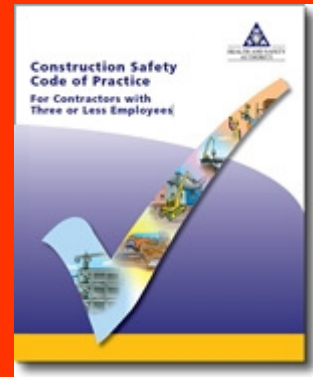
The company which had virtually no money or assets, received a token £10 fine. As well as a one year jail term, the director was disqualified from acting as a company director for 5 years.

CODE OF PRACTICE

3 OR LESS EMPLOYEES

A new code of practice has been launched by the Health and Safety Authority for employers with 3 or less employees.

An employer may adopt this code of practice in lieu of preparing a safety statement. They must however comply with all other sections of the 2005 Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act.

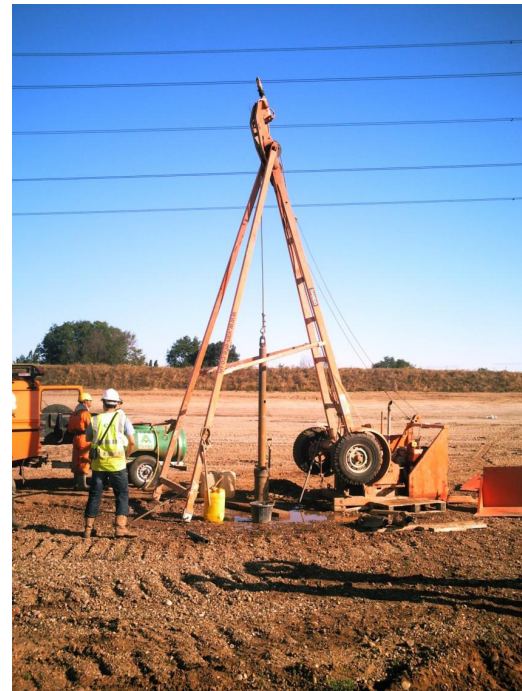


SITE INVESTIGATIONS

The definition of "Construction work" in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006 includes exploratory site preparation work. This definition means that the responsibilities of all legal duty holders apply to the carrying out of site investigations. This is something which the construction industry has been slow to appreciate.

At a minimum a competent and adequately resourced Project Supervisor for Design Process (PSDP) and Project Supervisor for the Construction Stage (PSCS) must be appointed in writing by the client for the site investigation works. Should the site investigation involve a particular risk, such as work near high voltage power lines, a Preliminary Safety and Health Plan must be prepared by the PSDP and issued to any and all prospective PSCS. A Preliminary Plan is also required and the Health and Safety Authority must be notified of both Project Supervisor appointments should the duration of the exploratory site preparation work be expected to last longer than 30 days or 500 person-days.

The Regulations do not apply to site surveys



FLAT ROOF SAFETY GUARD RAILS - V - FALL ARREST SYSTEMS



Brian Lahiff

Falls from height continue to be one of the most significant causes of workplace fatal accidents in Ireland and designers have legal duties to avoid foreseeable risks to workers during construction, cleaning and maintenance of the finished structure. One area that requires particular attention is the design of permanent fall protection systems for flat roofs.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2006 require designers to identify any hazards their design may present during construction and subsequent maintenance and where possible eliminate the hazards or reduce the risk by applying the Principles of Prevention.

A hazard associated with designing a building with a flat roof is a fall from height during the subsequent maintenance of the roof finish, gutters, downpipes or any item placed on the roof. In order to discharge their legal duties a designer must specify a suitable control measure for this hazard such as a guardrail or fall arrest system. In order to determine an appropriate control measure a risk

assessment must be carried out to establish the frequency of access required to these flat roofs, for maintenance and operational reasons.

For example, if plant were to be located on a flat roof it is likely that a risk assessment will show a high frequency of access to the roof area. A high frequency of access will require permanent access to the roof with a passive collective protection measure, such as guardrails to be installed. A guardrail on the roof is considered a collective and passive control measure as it protects all personnel on the roof at any time and does so without the need for action on an individual's part.

Individual active protection measures, such as fall arrest systems, should only be considered when access frequency is low and only then when an emergency rescue plan is in place. A fall arrest system is considered an individual and active control measure as it only protects the wearer of the harness and requires action on behalf of the individual to put a harness on and use the system appropriately.

Many designers view the fall arrest system and safety harness as the panacea for protection against work at height risks. Someone whose fall has been arrested by a personal fall arrest system may suffer injury from suspension trauma caused by deceleration and from hanging motionless in the harness after the fall. Any person who has suffered an accident must therefore be rescued extremely quickly as effects from suspension trauma can result after just 15 minutes. Provisions for rescue are regularly inadequate with no effective plans to facilitate the speedy and safe recovery of fall arrest victims in order to prevent further discomfort, injury or even death.

It is important to remember that one of the Principles of Prevention requires that priority be given to collective protective measures over individual protective measures. Any design decision to specify an individual protective measure must be documented and included in the designer's assessment of safety.



SAFETY BY DESIGN