



INVESTIGATION CONTINUES AFTER PERSON SEVERELY INJURED IN BANHAM POULTRY FIRE

Health and safety officers are continuing to investigate a fire at a Norfolk factory which led to one person being airlifted to hospital. The blaze started at Banham Poultry on Station Road, Attleborough around 1.30pm on Wednesday, March 20.

Police at Banham Poultry in Attleborough following a fire.

Picture Simon Parkin.

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UNGUARDED STAIRWELL PLUNGE LEFT WORKER WITH SHATTERED HEEL



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FAILURE TO SECURE CONSTRUCTION SITE LED TO TEENAGER FALLING 10 M FROM SCAFFOLD PLATFORM



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TELEHANDLER STRIKE COSTS FIRM £50K



A Yorkshire-based company has been sentenced after it failed to separate workers on foot from moving vehicles at its site in Tadcaster, Selby.

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A Yorkshire-based company has been sentenced after it failed to separate workers on foot from moving vehicles at its site in Tadcaster, Selby.



Colin Smith, 62, broke his left leg when he was knocked over by a telehandler. Earlier this month his employer, Braegate Produce, was fined £50,000.

Leeds Magistrates' Court was told that the worker was walking across the middle yard to the maintenance workshop when the accident happened on 5 January 2018.

He was struck by three potato boxes loaded on the tines of a telehandler that another employee was driving.

During its investigation, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Braegate Produce had insufficient measures in place to prevent people being struck by moving vehicles.

The well-used pedestrian route that Smith was following to move from the production sheds to the maintenance workshop was not a protected walkway.

Workers on foot were also found to be venturing into areas where vehicles were working due to many boxes that had been stored in the yard.

The company had failed to ensure forklift truck and telehandler operators knew the rules to follow when transporting potato boxes around the site, and had not effectively enforced them.

Braegate Produce pleaded guilty to breaching reg 4(1) of the Workplace (Health and Safety Welfare) Regulations and was ordered to pay £962 in costs on top of its £50,000 penalty.

After the hearing HSE inspector Kate Dixon said: "Companies need to organise transport operators to reduce the risk it poses to pedestrians.

This should include consideration of the site, driver and vehicles. There are some quick, easy and inexpensive steps that can be implemented."

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The main contractor for a building site in Ash, Canterbury, has been sentenced after a worker fell 3 m through an unprotected stairwell opening.

Folkestone Magistrates' Court was told that a subcontractor to Brown Construction was laying bricks for the second storey of a house when the accident happened on 17 August 2017.

There was an opening in the floor where the stairs were to be installed and the worker slipped and fell through it.

He landed on his feet shattering his left heel, which required surgery.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that no measures were in place to prevent workers falling through the stairwell.

Brown Construction pleaded guilty to breaching reg 4(1) of the Working at Height Regulations, which requires employers to properly plan and supervise work at height and ensure it is carried out in a safe manner.

The company was fined £17,333.

After the hearing HSE inspector Ross Carter said: "In this case a worker suffered serious injuries which could have been avoided by taking simple measures, such as installing guardrails around the opening, to prevent workers falling from height."

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Investigation continues after person severely injured in Banham Poultry fire

An HSE spokesperson said today: "HSE's enquiries into this incident are continuing. We cannot comment further at this time."

Fire crews from Attleborough, Hingham, Thetford and Earlham extinguished the fire and paramedics treated one person for suspected electrical burns before they were airlifted to the nearest specialist burns unit at Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford, Essex.

The fire occurred less than six months after the bodies of two subcontractors from a pest control company were discovered at the Attleborough factory in October 2018.

Norfolk Constabulary said it was continuing to lead a joint criminal investigation into the deaths alongside HSE, which is providing technical and forensic support.

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A construction company has been fined £160,000 after a 12-year-old boy was able to climb a ladder accessing scaffolding at a site in south Wales before falling 10 m, sustaining life-changing injuries.

The ladder providing access to the scaffold was fitted with a ladder guard – a metal plate that can be padlocked in place across the rungs of a ladder.

However, the guard installed by Westdale Services did not completely cover the rungs of the ladder, allowing footholds used by two boys when they accessed the site.

According to the HSE, the injured boy climbed the unguarded ladder, went up to the top platform of the scaffold, then climbed another ladder to a height of approximately 10 m. This second ladder slipped, causing the boy to lose balance and fall to the ground. His injuries, including damage to his back, have required multiple operations and left the boy only able to walk short distances as he is unstable on his feet.

In a victim statement that she read out at Newport Magistrates' Court, the boy's mother, Kate Sherwin, described him as "a prisoner of his injuries".

"The potential for unauthorised access to construction sites must be carefully risk assessed and effective controls put in place"

HSE inspector Michael Batt

The HSE investigation found that security arrangements for preventing access to the scaffolding, especially by children from a nearby school, were inadequate.

For the HSE, barrister Alan Fuller told the court that the ladder guard was inadequate, saying: "Ultimately, the removal of ground floor ladders at the end of each day would have removed the risk altogether."

The defence said that Westdale Services took health and safety seriously and had no previous convictions.

The court was told that warning signs had been placed around the scaffolding, and that "the company's original intention was to remove ladders altogether".

However, it was stated that a contractor had informed Westdale Services that removal of the ladders would invalidate the scaffolding tag, a system that indicates that the scaffolding has been inspected by a "competent person" and is safe to use under the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

The defence also said that the inadequate ladder guards had been provided by the contractor.

Westdale Services of Doncaster Road, Askern, Doncaster, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

The judge fined Westdale Services £160,000 and ordered the company to pay prosecution costs of £22,310.

HSE inspector Michael Batt said: "The death or injury of a child is particularly tragic and a lot of thought must go into securing construction sites.

"Children do not perceive danger as adults do. The potential for unauthorised access to construction sites must be carefully risk assessed and effective controls put in place.

"This incident could have been prevented by removal of the ladder completely or installing an appropriately sized ladder guard to cover the full width of the rungs."

The National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC), a trade association that audits its members, has produced guidance for scaffolding firms and their clients on providing safe means of access to scaffold working platforms under the Work at Height Regulations 2005.



SG25:14 Access and Egress from Scaffolds via Ladders and Stair Towers, says that it is the responsibility of the client to prevent unauthorised access to the scaffold structure at all times.

Contractors acting as clients should therefore give clear instruction the scaffolding contractor at tender stage on any measures to be supplied to prevent unauthorised access.

While the guidance notes that a ladder guard can be used to prevent unauthorised access, the NASC recommends "that ladders for the first lift are removed when not in use and kept in a secure storage area".

A spokesman for NASC declined to comment on the advice Westdale claimed to have been given by its subcontractor.

