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Poorly erected tower costs £21,000

Thomas Long & Sons Ltd and M-tech Engineering Ltd have been fined a total of £21,000 after a man fell nine metres from a mobile scaffold tower being used to install a steel staircase at a building in Nottingham, in April 2009, seriously injuring his back.

Thomas Long & Sons was the principal contractor, while M-tech Engineering was contracted to install the staircase. The 38-year-old M-tech employee fractured two vertebrae and was off work for almost seven months.

A Health and Safety Executive investigation found the tower had not been erected to the manufacturer's instructions or

industry guidelines, it was also supported on a platform that was not sufficiently rigid to provide a suitable base and the working platform was not fitted with adequate guardrails to prevent falls. M-Tech was fined £8,000 plus costs of £4,000, while Thomas Long was fined £6,000 plus costs of £3,000 – both pleaded guilty.

Who trained him then?



In this example from Dartford in Kent, we have an inadequate guardrail - a diagonal brace that does not fit and supported on planks - totally inadequate. But at least they have hi-vis vests and hard hats! Mistaken priorities?

Verizon fined \$140,000

In the USA OSHA has cited communications giant Verizon Communications Inc. for the maximum fine of \$140,700, for 10 alleged safety violations in connection with the electrocution of employee Douglas Lalima, 37, last year, while using an aerial lift in Brooklyn, New York. The company has disputed the findings and says that it will appeal the ruling.

Lalima came into contact with a live power line and caught fire as he attached steel suspension strands to a utility pole from a bucket truck. An OSHA inspection found that although a 15 year veteran of the company, he had never received proper safety training. Verizon was cited for similar violations in 2007

after an employee died in Providence, Rhode Island, thus the maximum penalty. According to its union the company has experienced eight power line related fatalities since 2002.

OSHA also cited Verizon for other 'serious' safety hazards, including the fact that protective equipment

C&a training

Lack of harness costs a life and \$30,000

A tree trimmer working for Davey Tree Surgery of Livermore, California fell seven metres to his death from an aerial lift in Pebble Beach last September, because he was not wearing a harness and lanyard. The company has been issued with four citations totalling \$30,000.

According to the report Carlos Amezcua, 46, was removing branches from a tree close to power lines, while a colleague directed traffic, when the platform levelling system broke due to a lack of maintenance and lubrication. Amezcua was dumped out of the basket head first and hit several branches on the way down.

The citations, three serious and one general, allege the company violated various operational safety

procedures, the most serious being that the employee was not wearing a harness - which cost \$18,000 alone, but also that critical inspections and lubrication of the 'bucket-levelling system on an aerial boom truck' were not carried out.

A harness and short lanyard does save lives



Scaffold apprentices find work

Warrington based scaffold training provider Simian Skill has found work for 10 young apprentices across, North West England. The company runs a 16 week 'guaranteed apprenticeship' programme - funded by Skills Solutions in Manchester - in which they gain a Diploma in Scaffolding alongside practical hands-on experience. As part of the programme, Simian Skill works with its contacts to find employment for those apprentices that qualify for the diploma.

The young scaffolders, the third group to graduate, found work with Deeside based NSG UK, Cheshire Scaffolding, Widnes based PDL and Grimes Scaffolding in Liverpool. Simian training director Dave Abraham said: "The Guaranteed Apprenticeship programme gives young people a solid background in scaffolding, giving them both the practical and theory skills they need to move into the world of work. Many of these young lads come from deprived areas and tough backgrounds, some are third generation unemployed."

"We have 16-year-old school leavers and men in their 30s who come

straight from the dole - it is real mix. The course is no easy route - it is an intensive 16 weeks and we demand the highest quality work as well as discipline and good time-keeping. They have to undertake a variety of assessments both in the classroom and in our dedicated training centre.



hadn't been inspected and employees weren't trained to take proper safety precautions. OSHA said: "Verizon was fined the maximum for five serious

violations. All of these conditions are serious in the sense that they were life-threatening hazards. The recurring nature of these hazards is disturbing."