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£27K FOR SCAFFOLD TOWER OVERTURN

UK construction company Add Prop has been fined £20,000 plus costs of £7,000 after a scaffold tower overturned and landed on two pedestrians in southwest London. The tower, which was under the supervision of the company's sole director, Atif Riaz, was incorrectly assembled, had not been inspected by a competent person, and was not adequately separated from the public. It was then covered in sheeting which acted as a wind sail, causing it to overturn and land on two members of the public, resulting in serious injuries.

The HSE found that Riaz had been negligent as a director and project manager despite knowing the risks of wind loading on scaffold structures.

The company had previously received a Prohibition Notice over unsafe tower scaffold work at another site.



OVERTURN COSTS CRANE OPERATOR A\$24K

A crane operator, 38, has been fined A\$20,000 plus A\$4,000 in costs after his 200 tonne five axle All Terrain crane overturned onto a 70 tonne crane at a site in Williamstown North, Melbourne, Australia in 2023.

The crane's boom was fully extended over the rear at the time, while the operator was packing up for the day, but for some reason, rather than retract the full boom first, he lowered it to the point where the crane lost stability and overturned, with the boom landing on the counterweight of a 70 tonne crane almost 60 metres away. Fortunately, no one was hurt in the incident, although the operator needed help to exit the cab.

The investigation found that the crane, a Terex Demag from Major Cranes, overturned because its load limiter override switch was activated, allowing the boom to be lowered beyond its capacity. The investigation also found that the crane had been overloaded several times that day when those working below were too close to moving loads.

WorkSafe chief health and safety officer, Sam Jenkin, said: "Ensuring heavy machinery is correctly operated at all times is critical to worksite safety as improper configuration can lead to malfunctions and potential serious injury or death."



FATAL SCISSOR LIFT FALL

Scottish company Food Processing Engineering has been fined £50,000 plus a victim surcharge of £3,750 after an employee was thrown from a scissor lift at the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland. The HSE found that it had failed to adequately assess and manage the risks of the work it was contracted to carry out.

Steven Tervit, 32, was dismantling wall panels from a cleanroom at a height of around four metres when several panels dropped onto the machine, throwing him from the platform to the floor below, causing a traumatic brain injury, rib fractures, lung contusions and fractures to his right thigh bone and left shin bone. He died in hospital the following day.

HSE inspector Amna Doherty said: "The failings of this company cost a much loved husband, father and son his life. Falls from height remain the leading cause of workplace death and injury."



WHO TRAINED HIM THEN?

Spotted recently by a reader from Manchester, UK, a man pressure washing the pitched roof of a house. In the reader's own words: "I am watching a man jet wash a roof with no fall protection from my home office window. I can't fathom the logic in risking your life for what I imagine is about £25 for a harness and lanyard."

Pressure washing moss and other growth from roofs is a rapidly growing industry in the UK, and thankfully, it employs a wide range of aerial work platforms, but many practitioners resort to tactics like this. But it has to be said that in most examples we have seen, some form of fall protection is used - steep slopes and water rarely mix, no matter how grippy your boots are.

