

Falls from height easily avoided

We are warning the construction industry that it is unacceptable for workers to continue being harmed from the well-known risk of working at height.

Lindsay Whyte Painters and Decorators Ltd was recently sentenced in the Oamaru District Court after a worker fell 2.8 metres, from a roof with no edge protection, through a glass table onto concrete in April 2016. Two workers were on the roof and exposed to the risk of fall.

Our investigation found that the business had failed to identify the risk of a fall, failed to put any fall protection in place and did not ensure workers were trained and instructed in working at height.

General Manager of Operations and Specialist Services Brett Murray said that falls from height were easily avoided.

“More injuries happen on residential building sites than any other workplace in the construction sector. Even a fall from the roof of a single story can be fatal and controls need to be put in place.

“The best controls are those that don’t require active judgement by a worker. This includes solutions such as edge protection or scaffolding. If a worker slips or missteps, as we saw in this case, there is a physical barrier between themselves and the ground below”.

Notes:

- Lindsay Whyte Painters and Decorators Ltd was convicted and fined \$50,000 and ordered to pay \$20,000 reparation to the victim.
- Lindsay Whyte Painters and Decorators Ltd was sentenced under section 36 (1)(a) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
- Being a PCBU, failed to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers who worked for the PCBU, while the workers were at work in the business or undertaking.
- The maximum penalty was a fine not exceeding \$1,500,000.