

## Schindler fined £300,000 for Heathrow lift fatality

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A lift engineer was crushed to death while installing a passenger lift during the construction of Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport.

Schindler Ltd was fined £300,000 and ordered to pay £169,970 towards costs for multiple safety breaches relating to the incident, which took place on 27 October 2007.

Isleworth Crown Court heard that Kevin Dawson, 45, was working for Schindler and was part of a team installing 140 lifts in the new terminal building. He was working from a ladder within the pit of the lift shaft to install an emergency stopper. One of his colleagues used the lift car to fetch equipment from a higher level, but as the lift went up a counterweight descended, which crushed Mr Dawson and killed him instantly.

The HSE's investigation found no evidence that Schindler had carried out a risk assessment. The company had failed to put precautions in place to prevent workers from being crushed by moving lift components. Inspectors also discovered that radio and telephone arrangements were ineffective, and workers routinely communicated by shouting up and down the lift shaft. This was potentially confusing for others were working in adjacent shafts.

HSE Principal Inspector Norman Macritchie told SHP that Schindler had failed to properly plan the work and no worker should have been allowed to work from a ladder inside the lift shaft. He explained that Mr Dawson should have been instructed to use the lift car to move him up and down the shaft.

"Kevin Dawson's death is a wake-up call for all involved in the installation and maintenance of lifts. His death was entirely preventable, and we need to ensure that nobody else suffers the same fate," said Principal Inspector Macritchie.

"It's hard to overstate the potential for death or serious injury arising from moving machinery, electricity and working at height – all of which are everyday risks in this industry.

"Lift shafts by their very nature, are confined and often poorly-lit places, where heavy components can move suddenly, silently and without warning. Due planning and extreme care must be taken at all times. It wasn't on this occasion and a life was needlessly lost as a result."

Schindler appeared in court on 30 March and pleaded guilty to breaching s2(1) and s3(1) of the HSWA 1974, and reg.8(1) of LOLER 1998, for failing to adequately plan a lifting operation.

SHP has made repeated attempts to contact the PR company that represents Schindler for a statement, but has received no reply.