



Media Release - SafeWork SA

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EMPLOYERS FINED OVER SERIOUS CONSTRUCTION SITE INJURIES

Two SA construction firms have been fined over safety breaches that resulted in serious injuries to their employees.

The penalties were handed down in SA Industrial Relations Court last Friday, after both companies pleaded guilty to breaches of Section 19 of the *Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986*, in failing to ensure the safety of employees whilst at work.

Garwood Contractors Pty Ltd was fined \$44,000 plus costs over two breaches resulting from an incident in August 2005 at a residential building site at Strathalbyn.

A male employee was trapped and seriously injured, when a trench first collapsed on him, and then a skid-steer loader operating alongside slid into the trench on top of him.

There was no shoring to reinforce the trench sides, nor any adequate training, instruction or supervision for the workers regarding the hazards involved.

Better Homes Builders Pty Ltd was fined \$36,000 plus costs over an incident at its Mitre 10 store at Port Augusta in February 2005.

During extension works at the premises, a male subcontractor fell 7 metres and sustained multiple serious injuries.

SafeWork SA's investigation revealed there was no fall protection in place, and little attempt to identify or manage the foreseeable risks of working at height.

Both companies received 20% reductions in their penalties for their early pleas and cooperation with SafeWork SA.

SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson says it's disappointing and frustrating that workers were so badly injured as a result of two of the most common and easily preventable hazards in the construction industry.

"Shoring trenches and fall protection should be basic safety precautions at any site where this type of work is being undertaken," Ms. Patterson says.

"In each of these cases, the victims have been lucky to escape alive but they've paid a terrible price in terms of their physical and mental wellbeing because of these basic safety failures."

For answers and advice on workplace health and safety and the relevant laws, SafeWork SA operates a telephone Help Centre on 1 300 365 255 or 8303 0400. To report serious accidents or incidents, in the workplace call 1 800 777 209