

**The death of an engineer at Heathrow Airport has cost lift manufacturer Schindler almost £470,000.**



Kevin Dawson died in October 2007 while helping to put three new lift cars into a passenger lift shaft during work to build Terminal 5A at the airport.

He was working from a ladder in the shaft's pit when a colleague used one of the cars to fetch equipment from a higher level. As he did so, a counterweight descended, crushing Dawson.

The HSE's investigation found that Schindler was using the unfinished passenger lift, which had safety-critical components missing, to carry workers, tools and materials.

Isleworth Crown Court also heard that the firm's radio and telephone communications were inadequate. This left workers routinely shouting up and down the lift shaft, which was potentially confusing while other engineers were working in nearby shafts.

HSE investigators could find no evidence that Schindler had identified the risk of crushing from moving lift parts, which meant it failed to plan, organise or supervise the work properly.

HSE principal inspector Norman Macritchie said the death was “wake-up call” for everyone involved in installing or maintaining lifts.

“Lift shafts by their very nature are confined and often poorly-lit places, where heavy components can move suddenly, silently and without warning,” he said.

Schindler admitted failing to protect employees and others, in breach of Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

It also pleaded guilty to a further charge under Regulation 8(1) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations, which requires employers to ensure lifting operations are properly planned and supervised, and carried out safely.

On Friday (30 March), the company was fined £300,000 and ordered to pay £169,970 in prosecution costs.

Swiss-based Schindler Group — which manufactures, installs and maintains lifts, escalators and moving walkways — employs around 44,000 people worldwide.