



HILLINGDON

LONDON

Occupational Health & Safety - GREEN ALERT Children injured by classroom ceiling collapse!

Issue reference: OHS0147

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Applicable to all headteachers

An educational trust has been fined after 15 schoolchildren and their teacher were injured when their classroom ceiling collapsed during a lesson.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) has been very much in the news of late. However, this incident does not relate to the use of RAAC but it could have.

Fifteen Year 3 pupils, aged between seven and eight, and their teacher had the ceiling collapse onto them at a school in London. Tables and chairs being stored in the attic above were among the falling debris. The children and teacher sustained upper limb fractures, cuts as well as concussion.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found items such as desks and chairs were stored in an unsuitable area in the school's attic. This area was not designed to be load bearing and led to the ceiling collapsing.

The HSE also found the trust had failed to undertake any structural or load bearing capability assessments of the area being used to store the items. The trust had also failed to assess whether the area in question was appropriate to be used for the storage of these items.

The trust pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The trust was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £7,116.31 in costs at Court in August 2023.

The HSE Inspector said: "This incident has resulted in injuries to multiple young children due to the failings of the school to ensure that chairs and tables were safely stored above their classroom."

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“Schools should be a place where children can come to learn from teachers and one another without having to worry about their safety.

“Fortunately, this incident did not cause any more serious injuries, but the mental and emotional impact of such an event should not be understated.

“Employers need to take action to ensure that building stability and solidity problems are not caused through overloading areas not designed to bear weight. As proven, the failure to do so can have severe consequences.”

What you need to do:

Consider whether you need to store items. If they are redundant get rid of them!

- Check the storage area is suitable. I.e. you are not
 - Storing combustible items in plant rooms, boilers rooms etc
 - Compromising escape routes
 - Overloading floors
 - Making access to or egress from doorways/entrances difficult
- When storing above ground level or on a supported floor, ensure checks are made that it can safely accommodate the load being applied.

Should you require any further information or support in implementing the requirements of this alert please contact your [Health & Safety Team](#)

Traffic light key	
Red alerts	Mandatory - where immediate action may be required
Amber alerts	Mandatory - with a timescale for action that may be required.
Green alerts	Information only