Fall Protection Fatality File

Cessco fined for 2016 fall that killed veteran welder

Cessco Fabrication and Engineering Ltd. pleaded guilty in Alberta provincial court to a single charge of failing to ensure a worker used a fall protection system for the Jan. 19, 2016, death of Barry Maitland.

Maitland, a pressure welder for 29 years, was fatally injured after falling more than five metres (17 feet) from the top of a liquified natural gas storage vessel on which he was preforming a weld. He later died in hospital.

Maitland had just started a night shift in a fabrication shop at Cessco's Edmonton facility on the day of the accident.

Maitland, 52, was setting up to perform a weld on top of the LNG equipment, which measured 28 metres long and just over four metres in diameter. At some point, he stepped off an aerial work platform used to hold his welding equipment.

An agreed statement of facts states Maitland did not anchor the lanyard on his fall protection harness before stepping off the platform. A short time later, the night shift supervisor and another worker heard Maitland hit the concrete floor, though no one witnessed the fall itself.

The parties agreed that while Cessco's fall protection plan complied with occupational health and safety legislation, it did not specifically cover welding work on the LNG vessels.

Under a joint submission on sentencing, Cessco will pay a $5,000 fine and pay the Manufacturer's Health and Safety Association $170,000 to create an enhanced fall protection program.

An autopsy found Maitland's cause of death was blunt cranial

trauma, according to the agreed facts. It also found evidence of alcohol in his system and severe heart disease, including an enlarged heart.

Court heard Maitland was known as a very safety conscious worker who regularly raised issues during safety meetings. His family described him as “anal retentive when it came to safety.”

“The boys were constantly trying to upstage their dad – ‘I’m a better welder, I can do this better than you can,’” Linda Maitland recalled. “Barry would be like, ‘Yeah, no, I don’t think so, let’s go try.’”

Linda Maitland said that while she received compensation from Occupational Health and Safety for her husband’s death, she will end up having to sell her home.

Cessco president Dave Hummel, who was not president at the time of the accident, was visibly shaken as he addressed the court. He said the day of Maitland’s death is “forever etched in our history.”