

# Young Window Cleaner Survives 15 Metre Fall

Nick Vassilev March 25, 2013



Professional window cleaners from Aceclean

**An 18-year-old woman working for a window cleaning company in Auckland, New Zealand, fell 15 m after a health and safety breach and survived, but with multiple injuries. Two companies have been ordered to pay her around NZ\$40,000 in compensation after a 12-month investigation.**

(Newswire.net -- March 25, 2013) London, UK -- An 18-year-old window cleaner survived a 15-metre fall while abseiling to work at height in Auckland, New Zealand. A review conducted as part of the investigation into the accident found that several health and safety breaches occurred, none of which were the young professional's fault.

The 18-year-old woman, whose name has not been released for privacy reasons, was preparing to abseil into position to work at height on the Lion House building close to the central business district of Auckland, New Zealand, during one day in February 2012. She was instructed by her employer to attach her sling and harness ropes to air-conditioning brackets at the top of the building. Unfortunately, these brackets were not fixed to the roof of the building being cleaned. The resulting fall hospitalised the young window cleaner for a fortnight with multiple injuries, including a lacerated liver, and fractures in the neck and skull, among other injuries.

The window washing company employing the unnamed young worker as well as the larger cleaning company contracting that company have both been fined after a year-long investigation and review into the incident. Both companies were fined and, on top of this, had to pay nearly NZ\$40,000 in compensation to the injured worker.

"It would be nice to say that this sort of thing doesn't happen on this side of the world," said a spokesperson from Aceclean, a London-based cleaning company. "Unfortunately, health and safety breaches happen all the time all around the world. You've got to be so careful when working at height as a window cleaner. We're glad to hear that this young woman survived her ordeal and we hope she has been able to return to work – if she still wants to after going through that. But it was really bad on the part of the employers not to have checked for safe fixing points before giving those instructions to an employee who can't have been out of school that long."

When queried as to what health and safety protocols they had in place to prevent similar accidents happening to their London employees, the Aceclean spokesperson said, "We discourage the use of ropes and harnesses for high-up windows, and we issue our [professional window cleaners](#) with high-reach window washing machines. These machines can get up 72 feet, which is about twice the distance fallen by the young woman, and they can be operated from the ground, completely reducing the risk of falls."

It is not known whether similar technology such as the high-reach window washing machine was available to the window cleaning company employing the young woman, or even if such equipment is readily available to professional window cleaners in New Zealand.

To contact Aceclean about safe window cleaning at any height, see: <http://www.aceclean.co.uk/>.

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