

Construction worker suffers serious fall

A construction worker fell from the second floor while working on a single family home in the Vandyk Summerhill development in Shelburne on April 28th. According to Ron McMillan, the VP of Communities for the Vandyk Group, the man slipped while erecting wood floor panels and fell through to the first floor. The fall occurred around 3:30pm on Monday afternoon at one of the 70 homes currently being constructed in the new residential area.

Dufferin County Paramedic Services, Shelburne and District Fire Department and Shelburne Police responded to the industrial accident call. Arriving at the scene, emergency personnel found an injured 37 year old male appearing to suffer from head trauma. Reportedly the accident victim also had a broken arm.

In a press release, Police Constable Paul Neumann stated, "Preliminary information indicates that the construction worker fell over 10 feet to a hard wooden surface below. Shelburne Police initiated an investigation and the Ministry of Labour was brought in as these types of incidents fall under their mandate." Constable Neumann told the Free Press that the man was "transported by land ambulance to the pad here in town because there wasn't an appropriate place for the helicopter to land in the construction site." The victim was then air lifted from the Shelburne Air Ambulance Landing Pad and taken to Sunnybrook Hospital in north-central Toronto. Monday night, Vandyk's Ron McMillan said the worker was diagnosed with a small amount of bleeding on the brain and said to be in serious, but stable condition. Ron McMillan relayed that it is "too soon to tell the outcome," as a result of the injury, and that the worker is being kept at Sunnybrook.

The man was an employee of Sungate Framing, a subcontractor working for Vandyk at the time. Ron McMillan says there are approximately 40 workers on site at any one time, eight of which are Vandyk employees and site supervisors. McMillan noted that it is the first worksite accident in Shelburne in the four years that he had been here and that "Vandyk has a very stringent health and safety record. This is definitely the most serious accident in our 30 year history as a company."

Summerhill is a residential community, under construction in the Northwest part of Shelburne, consisting of 234 detached homes and 121 townhouses. The Vandyk Group held a Public Meeting in Council Chambers on the evening of the 28th of April for their latest proposal, a four storey residential condominium with up to 80 units and an adjacent 3100 sq. ft. retail space on the south-west corner of the intersection of Col. Philips Drive and Highway 10. Mayor Ed Crewson's first order of business, when he entered the Council Chamber, was to ask about the condition of the worker. Both he and Councillor Randy Chambers commented on the rarity of an air ambulance in the skies over Shelburne and the concern everyone felt.

Ron McMillan confirmed that the site supervisor at the Summerhill development called emergency personnel. "The incident was immediately reported to the Ministry of Labour which follows up on all health and safety regulations and investigations for accidents on construction sites," he said. An email update from Mr. McMillan, Tuesday at noon, reported the worker was "in stable condition with non-life threatening injuries - very good news." On behalf of the Vandyk Group, McMillan expressed "concern for the health of the worker" and says the company will be following up with their "own investigation to make sure the site is safe for all workers going forward."

By Marni Walsh