

Company fined after worker fell down a lift shaft

A care home was sentenced after an employee suffered significant injuries after falling around 1.5 metres down a lift shaft.

Northampton Magistrates' Court heard how on 25 September 2016 the employee was using the platform lift to transport the residents' breakfasts from the kitchen to the dining room on a different floor. An interlock system which meant that the lift door could only be opened when the platform was at the right floor was broken. The employee fell down the shaft because the platform was at a lower level.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the door locking mechanism had been broken for about a month prior to this incident and management failed to deal with the known issue of employees overriding the door safety locking mechanism with a screwdriver. The lift had also not been thoroughly examined.

Sutton in the Elms Care Limited of Sutton Lane, Leicester pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and Regulation 9(3)(a)(i) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations and has been fined £14,000.00 and ordered to pay costs of £2535.90

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Michelle Morrison said "This incident could so easily have been avoided, had the management at the care home ensured that employees were not manually over-riding safety features on this platform lift. Safety features on all work equipment are designed to keep people safe and prevent accidents, such as this one.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.