

North east sawmill fined after employee has his leg amputated

A sawmill in north east England has been fined after a serious incident at its site resulted in an employee having his leg amputated above the knee.

Sunderland Magistrates' Court heard that, in July 2016, an employee of A & J Scott Limited attempted to clear a blockage on the conveyor feed and edger machine. As he climbed onto the machine he was caught by the moving parts, pushed forward and his trailing leg was amputated below the knee by the saw blade.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had not ensured that measures were taken to prevent access to the dangerous moving parts of the sawmilling equipment. They also failed to safeguard employees who would be working at height whilst on the machine and take steps to prevent employees standing on the machinery whilst it was live, and in a state that it could be turned on at any time.

A & J Scott Limited of Station Sawmills, Wooperton, Alnwick pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £400,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,392.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Paul Wilson said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers.

"Had this been done then this worker would not have received life changing injuries".

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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.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.

Company fined after workers put in danger

A company has been fined after workers were spotted carrying out unsafe work on various roofs.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court heard that, on three separate occasions in 2016, a director of Quality Food Products (Aberdeen) Ltd carried out work at height when there were no suitable or sufficient measures in place to prevent him, nor the employees who were assisting him, falling a distance likely to cause personal injury.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that on one of those occasions the director and an employee accessed the roof by standing on the prongs of a fork lift truck which had a wooden pallet attached to it. During the course of the works they were seen to toss waste materials to the ground. Two other incidents were detailed which related to works carried out primarily by the director with brief assistance from an employee.

Photographs of the illegal activities were taken by concerned witnesses and HSE was alerted.

Quality Food Products (Aberdeen) Ltd of West Tullos Industrial Estate, Aberdeen, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6 (3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and was fined £10,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Connor Gibson said: "Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known.

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

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Demolition company fined after worker struck by concrete panel

A Demolition company has been fined after a worker suffered multiple injuries when he was struck by a concrete spandrel panel.

Manchester Magistrates' Court heard how Vale Park Demolition Services Limited was contracted to demolish a link bridge structure at Littleborough Primary School, Rochdale. On 29 October 2015, an employee of GT Scaffolding North West Limited was struck by a concrete panel weighing approximately 500kg when he was removing scaffolding that was placed in front of the final part of the link bridge that was due to be demolished. He suffered from a broken right shoulder, five broken ribs, three fractures to the spine, a punctured lung and a broken left foot.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the work was not suitably planned and the stability of the panel was not appropriately considered when removing the scaffolding.

Vale Park Demolition Services Limited of Hazelbottom Road, Crumpsall, Manchester pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined £4,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,397.64.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector David Norton said "The incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

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

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4. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/demolition.htm>

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9.5k fine for duo following fatal incident

The partners of a Suffolk based farm have been sentenced after a haulage contractor was killed by an overhead power line strike.

Basildon Magistrates' Court heard how on 30 August 2016, Mr Christopher Wilson, a haulage driver, was killed when his tipping trailer was raised and made contact with overhead power lines that ran across part of the yard hard standing at the Airfield Grain store, Parham near Framlingham, Suffolk. The site was managed by Nicholas and Roger Watts, partners of F S Watts & Sons. Mr Wilson was electrocuted and died at the scene.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that F S Watts and Sons had failed to take suitable precautions for work near to the overhead electric power lines despite the recommendations given to them previously by NFU Mutual Risk Management Services (NFU RMS).

Mr Nicholas Watts and Mr Roger Watts each pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 3(1)(a) contrary to regulation 14, of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and each was fined 9,500 and ordered to pay costs of £4,700.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Saffron Turnell said:

““This tragic incident led to the avoidable death of a young father. This death could easily have been prevented if those in control of operations at the grain store had acted to identify and manage the risks involved and put a safe system of work in place.”

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Construction company fined after employee crushed by dumper

A groundworks company has been fined after an employee suffered serious internal injuries while working in an excavation at Ghyllgrove Junior & Infants School in Basildon.

Southend Magistrates' Court heard how a site dumper was parked at a slight incline on a heap of excavated soil, adjacent to a partially backfilled trench. The dumper had been left unattended with the engine running when the failure of its handbrake caused it to roll forward into the trench and pin a worker against a pile of stacked concrete blocks. The worker suffered six broken ribs, a collapsed lung, multiple arm fractures and a broken nose.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident, which occurred on 24 February 2017, found the company had failed to regularly inspect and maintain the handbrake of the dumper, to ensure it remained effective. The soil heap had been placed too far back from the excavation, preventing it from acting as a safety barrier and there were no wheel stop blocks or chocks available for use by workers. The investigation also found the company failed to ensure this work was appropriately supervised and effectively monitored by management.

S & K Groundwork Solutions Limited, of Maypole Road, Maldon, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 5(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, and Section 22(2) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, and has been fined £23,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5220.65.

Speaking after the case, HSE inspector Glyn Davies said "This case highlights the importance of regularly inspecting and maintaining construction vehicles, including site dumpers, to ensure they do not deteriorate to the extent that they put people's safety at risk.

"In this case, the employee's life-threatening injuries could have been avoided if the company's management had regularly and effectively monitored and audited their safety management systems. Use of suitable stop blocks near the edge of the trench excavation, or use of wheel chocks, is one such method that may have prevented this incident, which could easily have been fatal."

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