

Recycling worker sustains serious injuries to leg in machine incident

A recycling company has been fined after an employee fell through a moving conveyor belt sustaining serious crush injuries to his right leg at the Accoil Paper Recycling Limited plant in Erith.

Westminster Magistrates Court heard how, on 19 January 2018, the worker was injured whilst trying to remove contaminants from a paper load prior to it entering a baler. He sustained multiple fractures, which have left him with reduced mobility and impacted on his ability to work.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive found the company failed to adequately manage the risk of workers being injured while operating machinery. It was common practice for workers and supervisors to jump on and off the moving conveyor belt feeding a paper baling machine to remove contaminants.

Accoil Paper Recycling Limited of Maypole Crescent in Darent Industrial Park, Erith was found guilty of breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. They were fined £75,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,706.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Chris McDowell 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 on the safe system of working. Suitable supervision arrangements should also be in place to ensure that workers are following the safe system of work.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, and supervisors were ensuring that this system was being followed, the injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."

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>