

Bakery company fined £400,000 after employee has left leg amputated

A food manufacturing company on the Wirral has been fined £400,000 after one of its employees had to have her leg amputated.

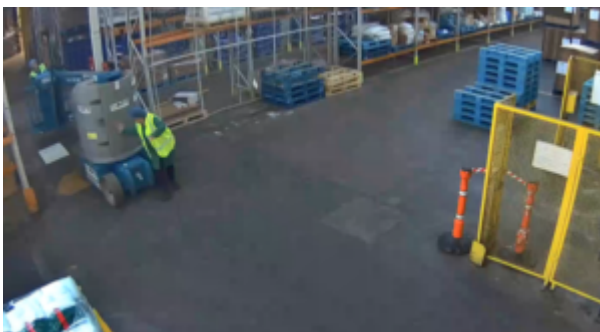
Sharon Bramhall lost a leg following a serious incident at Baker & Baker Products, which is based in Bromborough. The 58-year-old had to have her left leg amputated below the knee following the incident at the company's premises on Stadium Road.

Baker and Baker Products, which makes a wide variety of baked goods, pleaded guilty and was sentenced at Liverpool Magistrates' Court on 25 March 2024. In a statement provided to the court, Mrs Bramhall said she felt 'lucky' it wasn't worse.

"I know I could have died," she said.

"Sometimes I wake up and just wish I'd booked that night off work for some reason and none of this would have happened."

The court heard how Mrs Bramhall had been supervising four other members of staff as they completed high-level cleaning tasks during a night shift on 22 April 2022. She had been acting as 'a banksman' for an employee who was controlling a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP). As the MEWP turned through 90 degrees into the warehouse it struck Sharon, crushing her left leg. The incident was captured on CCTV.



- Just moments after this CCTV still was taken, Sharon Bramhall's life changed forever

She was hospitalised for three months and has had a total of nine operations including several skin grafts.

"I have a huge scar on my stomach from where the surgeons took a piece of it to use as a flap over my stump.

"My left leg above my stump is really badly scarred and damaged. It was trapped under the cherry picker.

“The recovery afterwards was awful.

“It is difficult to put in to words just how much the accident has impacted me. I have had to uproot and move my family.

“I am struggling with blistering on my stump, even now, rendering me wheelchair dependent. I am not able to leave the house on my own. I am fearful about what the future holds for me.”

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed a series of failings by Baker & Baker Products UK Limited.

The company failed to have in place a suitable and sufficient safe system of work when escorting MEWP's from a parked position to point of use. They also failed to provide information, instruction and training for the movement of the MEWP and use of banksman and also failed to adhere to their normal practice and company policy to ensure a trained MEWP operator acted as banksman.

Had these been implemented, the incident could have been prevented.

Baker & Baker Products UK Limited, of Stadium Road, Bromborough, Wirral, pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) and 33(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £400,000 and was ordered to pay costs of £7,266 costs. This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyers Karen Park and Matt Reynolds and paralegal officer Louisa Shaw.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Ian Betley said: “Sharon Bramhall suffered terrible injuries that will affect her for the rest of her life due to the failings of her employer.

“Vehicles continue to be a major cause of serious injuries in the workplace, and the first principle of any employer should be to keep people and vehicles apart.

“The risk assessment decided that someone was needed to escort the MEWP, thus a safe system of work needed to be devised. Employees should have been given appropriate banksman training, including how to effectively communicate with the driver.

“Had these been in place, Sharon's injuries could have been avoided.”

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.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is

available.

3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. HSE guidance on [working under vehicles](#) is available.