

Companies fined after employee fractures leg at reservoir



A contractor and a water management company have been fined after a worker was injured when he was hit by a 1.5 tonne water valve.

Newcastle upon Tyne Magistrates' Court heard that on 5 June 2018, Northumbrian Water Limited had contracted JW Colpitts & Co Limited to connect a 1.5 tonne water valve in a confined chamber at Kielder Reservoir, Northumberland. The valve was suspended from a lorry mounted crane when it swung across the chamber and struck the worker. He sustained an open compound fracture of his tibia and fibula and was airlifted to hospital.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that both companies had failed to risk assess the work and the additional hazards introduced by a change in the scope of work. They failed to implement suitable safety measures and safe systems of work; and provide adequate supervision to the workers.

Northumbrian Water Limited of Northumbria House, Abbey Road, Pity Me, Durham pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £365,000 and ordered to pay costs of £14,360.69 and a victim surcharge of £120.00.

JW Colpitts & Co Limited of John Anderson House, Coniston Road, Blyth Riverside Industrial Estate, Blyth pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 etc. They were fined £30,000 and ordered to pay costs of £17,452.22 and a victim surcharge of £120.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Clare Maltby said: "Companies must understand that work activities involving confined spaces, work at height and lifting operations must be subject to a robust risk assessment. Furthermore, risk assessments should be reviewed if the scope of work changes and

additional hazards are introduced.

“Companies must also ensure that they have suitable safety control measures and safe systems of work in place to address the identified risks. Appropriate arrangements should be in place to supervise and monitor work.”

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>