

Company fined after apprentice suffers crush injuries

A contract furnishing company was sentenced today after a worker suffered multiple injuries when sheeting collapsed on to him from a stack.

Teesside Magistrates' Court heard that on 10 September 2018, Conor Nicholson, a 19-year-old apprentice employed by Thomson Contracts Limited, was working with a colleague to retrieve a single 3m x 1.2m MDF sheet weighing 55kg from the back of a stack. As he was attempting to do this 16 sheets, each weighing 25kg, fell on top of him, fracturing his skull and pelvis and causing bleeding and bruising to the brain.

While he has returned to full time work, Conor continues to require pain killers to help him sleep and his sense of smell and taste have still not returned.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had a "pigeon hole" type racking system in place to safely store sheets. However, it was common practice, including on the day of the accident, to store sheets adjacent to, but not inside, the racking system.

Thomson Contracts Limited of Cold Hesledon Industrial Estate, Seaham, County Durham pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £22,000 with £1,258 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Stephen Garner said: "Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards.

"In this incident a young worker suffered serious, life-changing injuries which could have easily been prevented had appropriate physical protections been put in place."

For more information on this, please visit:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis2.pdf>

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>

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