

Company fined after vehicle struck an overhead power cable

Fairhurst Stone Merchants Ltd has been fined for safety breaches after a vehicle made contact with an uninsulated overhead electric power line.

Leeds Magistrates' Court heard that on 25 July 2018, a wagon delivering materials to the company's ready-mix plant in Settle was directed to tip its load close to the overhead power lines. During the tipping procedure the vehicle moved forward and made contact with the power lines which were live at 11,000v, nobody was injured in the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that two years previously, a wagon had made contact with the same power lines. No one was injured but the electricity supplier gave advice regarding avoiding a repeat incident. The only action taken by the company was to put up two small warning notices that the driver failed to see. In addition, the first incident was not reported to HSE as required by the RIDDOR regulations.

Fairhurst Stone Merchants Ltd of Langcliffe Mill, Stainforth Road, Langcliffe, Settle pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 3 of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and Regulation 7 of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. The company has been fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £621.42 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Julian Franklin commented: "Had the company reported the first incident to HSE and acted on the guidance from the electricity supplier, effective precautions could have been taken to avoid a repeat incident.

"This incident could have led to the death of the wagon driver. Standard industry-wide precautions should be followed to avoid the risk of contacting high-voltage overhead lines."

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^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/^[2]

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>^[3]

4. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/information/overhead.htm>

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