

Company fined after worker injured by 300kg batteries

A recycling company in West Yorkshire has been fined £120,000 after batteries weighing at least 300kg fell onto an employee and severely injured him.

The man was working with two colleagues at Wastecare Limited's site on North Dean Business Park, Halifax when he was struck by the batteries being recycled on 22 March 2019.

The three workers had been restacking the batteries that were stored in Flexible Intermediate Bulk Containers (FIBCs) after it had toppled over.

However, the FIBCs started to rip in front of them leading to the batteries falling on to one of the workers.

He suffered a double compound fracture to his lower right leg, a fracture to the left tibia, a fractured right collar bone, some bruising to his ribs and a cut on his forehead.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Wastecare Limited failed to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its employees at work. The site was overstocked, bags of batteries had been stacked in an unsafe manner and there was no specific documented risk assessments or safe systems of work for the correct stacking and storage of batteries. This was not an isolated incident.

HSE guidance says FIBCs must not be stacked unless the FIBC is designed to be stacked and only then should it be stacked in either a pyramid form or against two walls. Learn more about HSE guidance here: [Waste Management: Frequently Asked Questions \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/waste-management-frequently-asked-questions/)

Wastecare Limited, of Normanton Industrial Estate, Normanton, West Yorkshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £120,000 and ordered to pay £4,937.39 in costs at Leeds Magistrates' Court on 21 February 2024.

HSE inspector Jackie Ferguson commented: "There are specific Industry Standards and Guidance relating to Flexible Intermediate Bulk Containers (FIBCs) which provides users with information on a range of aspects relating to their use including filling, discharging, handling and storage.

"This incident could so easily have been avoided by implementing simple control measures and safe working practices to ensure the batteries were stacked safely and securely. The industry should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Samantha Crockett and supported by HSE paralegal officer Stephen Parkinson.

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.