

Company fined after worker seriously injured

A North-West specialist sheet metal fabrication company has been fined after an employee was left seriously injured when metal sheets fell onto his leg.

Liverpool Magistrates' Court heard how, on 5 February 2016, the employee and his supervisor were searching for materials within the workshop of Shearfab Limited when metal sheets that were not safely secured fell onto the employee's leg. The employee suffered a fracture to his left leg that required an operation to insert a large metal plate with nine screws.

The HSE investigation found that the company, despite previously being served improvement notices, had no system to ensure the sheet metal was always stored safely, the company had fixed and mobile racking, but there was no system in place to ensure they were used effectively.

Shearfab Limited, of Oldgate, St Michaels Industrial Estate, Widnes, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and was fined £10,000 with full prosecution costs.

HSE inspector Kate Lyon said after the hearing: "This was an entirely preventable incident. There were a number of failings however the underlying cause was poor health and safety management. Hopefully others can learn from this incident and adopt safer and better working practices. Metal plates and sheets are most stable when laid flat. When stacked on edge they should always be adequately supported in suitable storage equipment, such as toast racking."

More information regarding safe storage and handling of steel and other metal stock can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg246.pdf>

Notes to editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. 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>