

Engineering company fined after employee suffered serious injuries

An engineering company was fined after one of its employees, a blacksmith, sustained life-changing injuries whilst welding an industrial steel fabrication.

Dundee Sheriff Court heard that on 23 June 2017, Kenneth McIntosh was undertaking work to fabricate and weld dolphin jackets, devices which are secured to the seabed and used for mooring boats. A dolphin jacket, which weighed approximately 7.7 tonnes, moved in an uncontrollable manner trapping Mr McIntosh and crushing his feet. Half of Mr McIntosh's left foot was severed in the incident and a further portion had to be surgically amputated. His right foot could not be saved and was later surgically removed below his right knee to enable a prosthetic limb to be fitted.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that no written risk assessments or work method statements had been produced. A method was devised by the workers to move the dolphins into position and secure them using a combination of forklift trucks (FLT) and temporary steel supports, which failed. While the company may have had significant confidence in their employees' abilities, it was the company's responsibility to ensure work was carried out in safe manner at all times.

D Copeland Engineering Limited of Nobel Road, West Gourdie Industrial Estate, Dundee pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £25,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector, Michelle Gillies said: "Those in control of work procedures have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers to ensure the safe system of working.

"If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life changing injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."

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. hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>