

Exeter farmer fined after teenage worker injured on dumper

A farmer has been fined £8k after a teenage worker suffered serious head injuries when a six-tonne dumper he was driving overturned.

The 19-year-old and his friend, who was just 16, had been paid to move material as part of improvement works at Upper Kingswell Farm in the village of Longdown in Exeter.



The team suffered serious head injuries when the dumper overturned

However, farmer Richard Palfrey had failed to ask either for their age or what experience they had before giving them a short briefing of what he wanted them to do. Soon afterwards, [the dumper overturned on a steep incline](#) and although the 19-year-old ended up in intensive care, he managed to make a full recovery.

Yeovil Magistrates' Court heard about an area of land being excavated and levelled on the farm on 4 August 2019. The teens had been paid to move the excavated material using a dumper owned by Richard Palfrey, who was in charge of the excavation works at his farm. The young workers had only been on the farm for a few hours before the incident happened.



The teen made a remarkable recovery after the incident

An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found that Richard Palfrey did not ask the two young workers their ages or make any enquiries into their training or experience in operating dumpers. He gave the two young workers a very short briefing on what he wanted them to do but the steep route that he told them to take with the dumpers was inappropriate as it was steeper than the dumper manufactures said the dumpers could work on. The dumper that rolled had a seat belt but the seat was covered with a fertilizer bag meaning that the seatbelt could not be worn.



The seat was covered with a fertilizer bag meaning that the seatbelt could not be worn.

Richard John Palfrey of Upper Kingswell Farm, Exeter pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was fined £8,000 and ordered to pay costs of £15,324.40.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Simon Jones said: "Farmers should ensure that only property trained and qualified people use work equipment on their farms.

"Farmers should ensure that any equipment that they provide is safe to use.

"In this case Mr Palfrey allowed young and inexperienced workers to operate work equipment that could not be used safely. A dumper should only ever be operated by a trained driver and the seat belt should always be worn.

"These young and untrained workers should never have been allowed to operate the farm dumper.

"Young workers need careful nurturing and damaging them in this way can affect their future development.

"If Mr Palfrey had made the proper checks then this young worker would not have sustained the life threatening head injuries."

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.
4. Guidance about [dumpers and the hazards posed by them](#) is available