

Farming Business fined after employee crushed by concrete beam

A farming business has been fined after one of its employees fell from a trailer and was crushed to death by a concrete beam that fell with him.

Folkestone Magistrates' Court heard that on 13 March 2018, Trevor 'Ted' Elson of A.A. Clifton Limited, Burmarsh, was working with other employees to move six-metre-long concrete beams from the farmyard to the farmhouse, where an extension was under construction at the site at Hagueldands Farm, Burmarsh Road, Burmarsh, Kent. Each beam weighed more than 300 kg and needed to be lifted by a mechanical telehandler. Whilst on the trailer, attaching lifting chains to unload a beam, the deceased tripped and fell from the edge, catching one of the beams which was unstable from the way previous beams had been removed. This beam then fell from the trailer, landing on his upper body and crushing him to death.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the operation to move the beams was carried out at short notice and had not been properly planned. The employees were left to decide how to do it themselves, leading to an unsafe system of work. None of them had been trained in lifting and slinging operations.

A.A. Clifton Limited of Hagueldands Farm, Burmarsh, Kent pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and were fined £30,000, with full costs of £5446.50.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Stephen Green said "This tragic incident led to the avoidable death of a long-term employee. It could easily have been prevented if his employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, and to put a safe system of work in place. Those in control

of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working.”

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. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/

1. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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