

Company fined after electrician died following fall from crane platform



A company has been fined after an electrician died in fall of approximately eight metres when an access panel on the raised walkway of an overhead crane gave way beneath him.

Teesside Crown Court heard that on 25 October 2016, whilst working at Cleveland Bridge UK Limited's site in Yarm Road, Darlington, electrician Keith Poppleton was repairing wiring that had been causing a short circuit on the lifting equipment of a large overhead gantry crane, known as C25. As he was walking along the crane's walkway, an access panel gave way beneath his feet, causing him to fall through to the ground below. Mr Poppleton sustained fatal injuries and was pronounced dead at hospital.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to maintain the crane walkway's access panels, which had been used to replace lighting fittings some months earlier. Also, the panel itself had been subject to weld repair, and there was no evidence of any steps being taken to ensure that the panel was safely replaced into the void and secured to ensure it did not fail.

Cleveland Bridge UK Ltd of Cleveland House, Yarm Road, Darlington were found guilty of breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Regulation 5(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and Regulation 8(b)(i) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £1.5M and ordered to pay costs of £29,239.

Mr Poppleton, a former college lecturer in electrical engineering, leaves behind a wife and three daughters.

His wife Catherine Poppleton said: "The day Keith died a large part of me died with him. He was my world, he was the reason my life was interesting, exciting, safe and I felt loved.

"He was risk-averse and this respect for safety was something he practised as well as taught.

"I feel that the 'me' before losing Keith has gone. I do not feel like myself anymore, I do not feel whole."

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Jonathan Wills said: "Mr Poppleton and others were at risk from serious injury whilst walking on a gantry 26 feet high, as the company had failed to assess the risk of these access platforms, which should be secured in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions."

"This was an incident, which could easily have been prevented had the company considered the risks associated with such access panels not being secured in place following maintenance work and general wear and tear."



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
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>

[Metal recycling company and its director prosecuted after 15-year-old boy suffers serious burn injuries](#)

A metal recycling firm and its director have been sentenced after a 15-year-old employee of the company suffered serious burns following an explosion and flash fire.

Birmingham Magistrates' Court heard that on 1 August 2019 the boy, working on a casual basis for A & S Metal Recycling Limited, suffered 22 per cent burns to his body when aerosol canisters he had fed into a shredding machine exploded causing a flash fire at Unit 75A, Barracks Road, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire, DY13 9RW.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the work unit was not an appropriate facility for processing aerosol canisters; control measures to prevent or mitigate fire and explosion risks were not put in place. Despite this, the activity was undertaken by minors, employed as a part of a casual working arrangement, using inadequate equipment.

A & S Metal Recycling Limited of Barracks Road, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport-on-Severn pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £66,000 served as a compensation order to be paid to the injured person, ordered to pay cost of £8,192.55.

Simon Davies, director of A & S Recycling Limited, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was given a six-month custodial sentence suspended for two years and was ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid work.

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Alex Stobart said: "The waste and recycling industry has the potential to be extremely hazardous, and in this case two children were needlessly exposed to significant risks on site.

The explosion and fire led to one child being hospitalised with significant burn injuries. This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply implementing the correct control measures and a safe system of work, as standard within the industry.

"Waste and recycling companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/^[2]

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Motor vehicle scrap company fined after worker suffers crush injuries

A motor vehicle scrap company and a director have been fined after a worker suffered crush injuries in an incident involving a forklift truck.

Cambridge Magistrates' Court heard how on 1 March 2021, an employee of Queensferry Car Breakers Limited was injured when he was hit and run over by a forklift truck driven by his employer Ghol Mohammad Navabi. The forklift truck was being used to transport engine parts from the scrap yard up a loading ramp into the back of a metal container.

Whilst Mr Navabi was inside the container, he asked the worker to collect a car bonnet. The worker left the container and walked down the ramp returning quicker than Mr Navabi expected. As he was walking back up the ramp Mr Navabi reversed down it and ran over him, which resulted in multiple fractures to both his legs.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident found that the forklift truck had not been adequately maintained, had no working foot brake, no working hand brake and the steering was defective. There were no measures in place to segregate pedestrians and moving vehicles and the company had no employer's Liability Compulsory Insurance.

Queensferry Car Breakers Limited of Doddington Road, Cambridge pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, Regulation 5(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999; and Section 1(1) of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 ("the Act"). The company was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,923.

Sole director of Queensferry Car Breakers Ghol Mohammad Navabi pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, by virtue of Section 37(1). He was given a 20 week prison sentence suspended for 12 months, including 15 rehabilitation activity requirement days, 180 unpaid work hours and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £3,923.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Emma Page said: "This incident could have easily resulted in a fatality and could have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

"This risk was further amplified by the company's failure to undertake a number of safety measures including segregating vehicles and pedestrians."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:

www.legislation.gov.uk/

www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/lift-trucks/managing-lift-trucks.htm

www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/trafficroutes.htm

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

[Manufacturing company fined after employee suffered fatal injury](#)

A manufacturing company has been fined after an employee was found fatally injured under the forks of a side-loader lift truck.

Dudley Magistrates' Court heard that on 2 September 2019, a Cutting Edge Trading Limited employee, Mitchell Poutney, was fatally injured at the company site on Station Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands during a lifting operation. The unsupported forks and carriage of a side-loader lift truck descended, crushing him whilst he was working underneath it.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to provide a safe system of work for unloading palletised goods using the side-loader forklift truck.

Cutting Edge Trading Limited of Station Road Industrial Estate, Rowley Regis, West Midlands pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £18,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,153.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Principal Inspector Jenny Skeldon said: "This tragic incident could have easily been prevented if this employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved and put a safe system of work in place."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:

[Asbestos removal company fined for failing to protect workers](#)

An asbestos management company director has been jailed after failures to protect workers from asbestos exposure during a major refurbishment project in Plymouth.

Plymouth Magistrates' Court heard that in February 2017, concerns were raised by workers at Ensure Asbestos Management Limited who believed they were being put in danger whilst carrying out refurbishment work at a department store.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found irregularities in the asbestos surveys and clearance certificates, with some found to be fraudulent. Ensure Asbestos Management Limited had been contracted to carry out an asbestos survey, remove all identified asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) from the building and then carry out the initial strip-out of the building before it was refurbished. However, the company was found to have deliberately cut corners in managing the danger of asbestos exposure putting workers at risk.

- Ensure Asbestos Management Limited of Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £100,000. Because the company is in liquidation, there is no prospect of a payment being made and so no order for costs was made.

Director of Ensure Asbestos Management Billy Hopwood of Swanstead, Basildon, Essex pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. He has been sentenced to 10 months imprisonment, immediate concurrent on each charge. He has also been disqualified as a director for five years

Contracts Manager at Ensure Asbestos Management Phillip Hopwood of Churchgate Street, Harlow, Essex pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1), 3(1) and 33(1)(m) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. His sentencing was adjourned until a later date.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Georgina Symons said: "Ensure Asbestos Management Limited – a previously licensed asbestos removal contractor – failed to work within the law despite having a wealth of knowledge on the risks associated with exposure to asbestos and the necessary training to have done so safely. They deliberately falsified documents and cut corners.

“Workers should be supported by their employers when they raise health or safety concerns.

“The dangers associated with asbestos are well known and a wealth of advice and guidance is freely available from HSE and other organisations.”

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