

London waste firm fined £260,000 after worker suffers severe crush injuries

A waste and recycling company in London has been fined £260,000 after a worker sustained during maintenance work.

Grzegorz Poreba, an employee of Cappagh Public Works Limited, sustained severe injuries after becoming trapped between a conveyor and a metal bridge, which formed part of a waste sorting machine, at Riverside Road, Wimbledon, London on 11 September 2020.



- Grzegorz Poreba was caught between the metal bridge and the conveyor belt in the front of the photo and sustained severe crush injuries.

The 48-year-old had entered the machine to make repairs to the mesh of the hopper. The machine had not been isolated from all sources of energy before the repair work started and when it was inadvertently switched on, Grzegorz was thrown onto the conveyor, trapping him against a metal bridge.

Mr Poreba suffered multiple injuries, that required 23 screws and two plates inside his body, and has not been able to return to work since.

“The whole accident has turned my life upside down,” he said.

“I cannot walk or stand for longer than an hour and a half.

“It has been very hard. If I could turn back time, I could only wish that the accident had never happened. The doctors have been trying to regain my physical and mental health.

“The only success so far is that I am not in a wheelchair.”



- The Flex X Track Large Screener machine where the incident took place

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Cappagh Public Works Limited had failed to provide a suitable means to isolate the machinery from all sources of energy. The isolator switch had been broken and was therefore inoperative. The company also had no formal maintenance arrangements for the machinery.

Cappagh Public Works Limited, of Waterside Way, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act. 1974

The company was fined £260,000 and was ordered to pay £4,358 costs at a hearing at Westminster Magistrates Court on 20 October 2023.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Pippa Knott said: “The fine imposed should underline to everyone in the waste industry that the courts, and HSE, take a failure to ensure that maintenance work is completed safely extremely seriously.

“Grzegorz is lucky to be alive and the incident has left a lasting impression on him.

“We will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all that they should to keep people safe.”

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. HSE guidance on [maintenance of work equipment](#) is available.

