

Metal firm fined after injured worker loses leg

A metal fabrication company has been fined £40,000 after an employee suffered a serious leg fracture that led to a below the knee amputation.

The 37-year-old man and a colleague had been loading a steel beam onto the bed of a lorry in the visitors car park of London Gates and Railings Ltd in Watford on 30 August 2022. His colleague was operating a fork lift truck (FLT) with the steel beam suspended from it using a sling attachment, while man had been walking ahead of it using his hands to stabilise the beam. However, as the FLT moved forwards, the man's foot was caught by the front wheel of the FLT resulting in serious injuries to his lower leg.

At the time of the accident members of the public were present in the visitors' car park. The man's injuries were so serious he had to have surgery to have the lower part of his leg amputated.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that London Gates and Railings Ltd failed to properly assess the risk for loading lorries and provide a suitable safe system of work. The FLT operator had not been trained and access to and use of the FLT was not adequately controlled. There were also inadequate measures in place to segregate pedestrians, including members of the public, from workplace transport and associated lifting operations.

London Gates and Railings Ltd of Guillmore Farm, Sandy Lane, Watford, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. They were fined £40,000 and ordered to pay £5,114 costs at a hearing at St. Albans Magistrates Court on 10 December 2024.

HSE Inspector Adam Johnson said: "Incidents involving fork lift trucks (FLT's) and work place transport remain one of the most common causes of work-related accidents in this country.

"In this case, a suitable and sufficient assessment of risk, together with a planned safe system of work should have been completed.

"Only workers who are trained and authorised should operate FLT's. Access and use of them should be properly controlled. Adequate measures must also be in place to properly segregate pedestrians from workplace transport and associated operations"

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Neenu Bains.

Further information:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator

for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.

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 does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences in England and Wales can be found [here](#) and for those in Scotland [here](#).
5. HSE guidance on [safe use of lifting operations](#) and [rider-operated lift trucks](#) is available.