

Recycling firm sentenced after employees trapped in machinery

A waste recycling firm, its director and site manager have been sentenced after an employee died and a second employee was seriously injured when they became trapped inside machinery.

Durham Crown Court heard how on 12 December 2015, Simon Hogg and Raymond Garrett were operating a waste processing line at the Aycliffe Quarry site of Stonegrave Aggregates Ltd in County Durham. The line became blocked at various points including inside a large industrial trommel machine. The trommel incorporates a large perforated revolving drum, which acts to agitate, rotate and sieve the waste materials.

The two employees stopped the trommel and entered the drum to clear the blockage. While they were inside the machine two other employees, who were unaware that they were inside the machinery, restarted the production line. Mr Hogg and Mr Garrett remained inside the revolving trommel drum for approximately four minutes before the line was stopped and the two men were found inside.

Simon Hogg died at the scene after sustaining multiple injuries to his head and torso. Raymond Garrett sustained multiple serious injuries to his legs, arms and torso requiring extensive hospital treatment.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found there was a history of blockages occurring on the waste processing line, with operators regularly having to enter the trommel to clear materials. The line was not adequately guarded to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery. Control systems, including emergency stop controls, were not compliant with relevant standards and management did not adequately monitor or enforce machinery isolation procedures. CCTV showed that what guarding was provided to the trommel was being regularly bypassed by staff, including the site manager David Basham.

Stonegrave Aggregates Limited of Aycliffe Quarry, Newton, Aycliffe, Durham pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations. They were fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £48,952.

Director of Stonegrave Aggregates Limited Bruce Whitley of Oakwood Drive, Darlington pleaded guilty to breaching section 37 and section 33 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was given a 12-month community order.

Site manager at Stonegrave Aggregates Limited Aycliffe Quarry site David Basham of Devonport Gardens, Middleton One Row, Darlington pleaded guilty to breaching section 37 and section 33 of the Health and Safety etc. Work Act 1974. He was given a six-month prison sentence suspended for 12 months.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Michael Kingston said: “These tragic consequences could have been avoided. This case highlights the importance of implementing effective power isolation procedures when interacting with machinery and the need to monitor compliance to make sure these procedures are followed.

“HSE will not hesitate to prosecute companies or individuals who fail to implement and monitor safe systems of work.”

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>

4. More information on effective power isolation procedures and waste management guidance can be found at:

<https://www.wishforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/INF0-02.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/waste/index.htm>

<https://www.wishforum.org.uk/wish-guidance/>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/industry/waste-recycling.pdf>

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