

Recycling company fined after worker suffered life threatening injuries

EPS Materials Recovery Limited has been fined after a worker suffered injuries to his face and head when he was struck by a ball of compressed metal weighing approximately half a tonne. The metal was being used as a brush attached to the grab of a 360 degree excavator machine.

Swansea Magistrates' Court heard how on 8 May 2019, the employee was working in the vicinity of the grab machine. The driver swung the arm to the location of the employee and dropped the brush, in doing this the brush fell onto the worker striking him on the back and causing him to hit the floor with force. He suffered a fractured skull, a fractured eye-socket and fractured cheek bone.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to adequately segregate pedestrians and operating vehicles. Site induction procedures and training for new starters was inadequate. There wasn't any direct supervision for new starters to prevent access to the dangerous parts of machinery or to stop dangerous parts before access was gained.

EPS Materials Recovery Limited of Griagola Wharf, King's Dock, Swansea, was found guilty of breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and were fined £300,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,059.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Wayne Williams, said: "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 work.

"There is industry-produced guidance for this type of activity, which demonstrates how short the company fell of the required standard. If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the life changing injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."

The industry guidance for Hand sorting of Recyclables (Totting) with Vehicle Assistance can be found here:

<https://wishforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/WASTE-18-.pdf>.

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>

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