

Trucking company fined after 'hero' mechanic dies

A Lancashire trucking company has been fined £30,000 after a mechanic died while repairing a forklift truck.

Joseph Robinson, a mechanic at E. Jackson (Chatburn) Limited, was working with a new employee as they attempted to fix a steering fault on a forklift truck at the firm's site at Salthill Industrial Estate in Clitheroe on 13 October 2020. While doing this, Mr Robinson, 39, told the new employee, who was driving the forklift truck, to move the vehicle forwards.

However, the forklift truck reversed and trapped Mr Robinson against a trailer. The 39-year-old, who was from Clitheroe, was taken to hospital with severe head injuries following the incident and placed in an induced coma.



The forklift truck Mr Robinson was attempting to fix

He died the following day on 14 October 2020. On 15 October 2020, Mr Robinson's body was taken for organ donation, with a total of eight individuals receiving his donated organs.

Mr Robinson's mother, Sue Robinson, said in her VPS: "Joe was a much-loved son, brother, nephew, cousin and friend. He was a hero in our eyes, honest, hardworking, loyal and generous of spirit as evidenced by his request that in the event of his death that his organs be donated. Joe was always going to be a mechanic. As a little boy he loved to take things apart, see how they worked and put them back together, so on leaving school that was the profession that he chose to follow.

"As his parents, we have always been and always will be so very proud of the boy he was and the man he became, we grieve for him profoundly and miss him

in every way each and every day. His premature death robbed him of any opportunity of ever becoming a husband, a father or indeed growing into an old man and in turn robbed us, his family, of taking part in that journey.

“To lose a child is every parent’s worst nightmare and the shock and devastation we felt at his sudden death was both mind numbing and paralysing in its intensity. As a family we will never truly recover from losing Joe. All our futures are dictated by that one catastrophic day. We constantly mourn him and will continue to do so. We miss his cheeky humour, his one liner quips, his happy smiling face, his unconditional love and support.”

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the forklift truck was over 30-years-old and had not been maintained nor subjected to a Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) examination for some years. No principles of working with vehicles at the site had been put in place such as designating a safe repair area or separating pedestrians and vehicles. Had E. Jackson (Chatburn) Limited properly maintained the forklift truck and provided the driver with appropriate training this incident could have been prevented. HSE guidance can be found at: [Managing Lift trucks – Vehicles at work \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/lifttrucks/)

E. Jackson (Chatburn) Limited, of Downham Road, Chatburn, Clitheroe, Lancashire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,712.80 at Crewe Magistrates’ Court on 11 April 2023.

HSE inspector Shellie Bee said: “This incident could so easily have been avoided. The employer had not maintained the forklift truck in a suitable working condition and had allowed an untrained employee to operate it. This together with an inappropriate system to fix a fault on the machine meant that the truck and Joseph Robinson were in close proximity when it moved in a direction he had not anticipated. As a result Joseph tragically lost his life. Employers should ensure they carry out an assessment of the risks created by forklifts and ensure safe systems of work for their safe operation and maintenance are followed.”

Notes to Editors:

1. The [Health and Safety Executive](https://www.hse.gov.uk/) (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 can be found at: [Managing Lift trucks – Vehicles at work \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/lifttrucks/)