

West Yorkshire companies fined after delivery driver injured by falling pallets

Two West Yorkshire businesses, Brighthouse Pallet Services Ltd and Seal It Services Ltd, have been fined for safety breaches after a HGV driver suffered a fracture to one of his neck vertebrae.

Leeds Magistrates' Court heard that on 5 August 2020 the delivery driver, an employee of Brighthouse Pallet Services Ltd was struck by one or two falling pallets whilst they were being unloaded from a HGV trailer by a Seal It Services Ltd fork-lift truck (FLT) operator at the latter company's site at Elland.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that both companies failed in their duty to provide a safe system of work. They failed to put in place simple control measures to ensure that all delivery drivers who visited the Seal It Services Ltd site were moved to a safe location for waiting, whilst HGV trailers were being unloaded by FLTs.

Brighthouse Pallet Services Ltd of Elland Road, Brighthouse, West Yorkshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £4,000 and ordered to pay £4806.60 in costs.

Seal It Services Ltd of Riverbank Way, Elland, West Yorkshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £4,654.90 in costs.

After the court hearing, HSE inspector David Welsh, said: "Loading and unloading of HGVs by FLTs are among the most dangerous transport activities in the workplace. People can be hit by falling objects, struck by FLTs, or fall from vehicles.

"All such incidents can result in serious personal injury and the risks involved must be managed by all those who have legal duties for the safety of delivery drivers, both their employer and the sites they deliver to.

"This incident could so easily have been avoided by implementing the simple control measure of keeping the delivery driver out of the area where the FLT was operating to maintain a safe system 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 about workplace transport safety
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/puwer.htm>
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg136.htm>