

Window manufacturer fined after worker seriously injured whilst moving stillages

A UPVC window and door manufacturer has been sentenced after a worker was crushed whilst moving a stack of stillages weighing 3000kg.

Blackpool Magistrates' Court heard how, on the 9 January 2020, the worker, with two other employees of Sovereign Group Ltd, was locating a stack of three stillages loaded on a side loader into a gap in the aisle of the despatch area. Whilst manoeuvring the stillages away from the aisle, to make another attempt to push the stillages into the gap, the stack of stillages fell over onto the employee breaking both legs and causing ligament damage. The incident has caused lasting injuries which affect everyday life and the employee has not been able to return to work.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had no formal safe system of work in place and the operatives had developed their own system for swapping stillages, which involved unsafe lifting operations. The method adopted by the company was not safe and employees were not adequately trained or instructed. The despatch area was heavily congested at the time of the incident and poorly laid out for the stillages to be stored safely.

Sovereign Group Ltd of Vale Street, Nelson, Lancashire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £33,333 and ordered to pay costs of £5,191.58

HSE Principal inspector Lisa Bailey said after the hearing: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to ensure they provide safe methods of working and a safe working environment. If suitable controls had been in place the serious physical injuries sustained by this employee could easily have been prevented."

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

[Vehicle and transport safety at work \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk).

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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