

Worker hurt falling from gantry – company fined £27,000

A refrigeration company has been fined £27,000 after a worker sustained significant injuries when he fell from an incomplete gantry.

GEA Refrigeration UK Ltd was replacing a cooler unit located on a gantry 10m above the warehouse floor at an Iceland depot in Swindon on 1 February 2017.

This required a section of the gantry floor to be removed. A GEA employee fell 2.5 metres through the gap created by this removal and on to a cherry picker, suffering fractured ribs and internal injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to properly plan, co-ordinate and supervise the work, including the removal of the gantry floor to ensure the work was carried out in a safe manner to control the risks of falls.

GEA Refrigeration UK Ltd, of Ludgate Hill, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2015, and was fined £27,000 and ordered to pay £35,000 costs and a victim surcharge of £170 at Bristol Crown Court on 30 September 2022.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Leo Diez said: “This incident could have been avoided by identifying and implementing effective control measures and safe working practices.

“Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related injury and fatalities and the risks associated with working at height are well known.”

In his victim personal statement, the injured worker said: “The effect of the accident on my personal and work life has been huge and has had a lasting effect.”

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. hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. Guidance on working at height can be found here: [Work at height – HSE](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workatheight/)
4. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>