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Workplace Transport Warning

Employers must be vigilant about workplace transport, the HSE has urged, following a fatal incident in which an 18-year-old employee was struck by a reversing lorry at a waste management depot in Shipley, West Yorkshire.

Associated Waste Management Ltd of Brighouse, West Yorkshire, was fined £75,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000 after pleading guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

On 12 April 2007 the employee, working in the tipping area of the yard, was hit by a skip loader, which was reversing without the benefit of any visual aids, audible warning alarm or guidance.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Paul Robinson said:

"This incident was all the more tragic because it was avoidable. If the risks had been assessed, equipment been properly maintained and if appropriate safeguards been put in place it might never have happened.

"If work on the site had been properly planned to ensure separation between employees and manoeuvring vehicles, and the movement of vehicles had been properly supervised, this young worker may still be alive today.

"Transport, and the failure to plan for the safe movement of vehicles, is a major cause of death and injury in the workplace. In 2006/2007 there were 50 deaths and 1,449 major accidents caused by vehicles at work. However, with careful management, most of these incidents could have been avoided."

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Prosecutions

Construction Company fined £200,000

A fatal incident occurred during the construction of the main public building at the National Assembly for Wales in Cardiff.

Taylor Woodrow Construction Ltd, the company responsible for managing the Assembly's Senedd building project, pleaded guilty to a charge under Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 at a Cardiff Crown Court and were fined £200,000 and ordered to pay costs of £71,400.

Supervisor John Walsh, died after a wall collapsed, throwing him from his ladder in March 2004. Employed by sub-contractors, Ferson Construction Services Ltd, Mr Walsh was responsible for building a blockwork supporting wall at the Senedd. This included a cavity between the wall and the concrete frame of the main structure for insulation and damp-proofing. As Mr Walsh was working to fill the cavity, the wall surged outwards owing to pressure, jettisoning him backwards.

Despite Taylor Woodrow Construction recognising risks before the contract began, HSE inspector Alun Williams said the company had failed to properly manage the risk posed by working at height and by the pressure that the wall experienced during the process.

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£80,000 Fine for Fall Incident

The construction industry has been reminded of the need to ensure that work at height is properly managed, following the prosecution of the principal contractor on Europe's largest city centre regeneration project.

The warning follows the prosecution of Laing O'Rourke Construction Ltd after one of their employees, William Taylor, fell over three metres during the construction of concrete stairs inside one of the main apartment blocks on the project.

He sustained multiple serious head and other injuries and narrowly escaped falling three floors to the base of the building. Two other workers also escaped injury whilst working in the same unprotected area.

The incident happened on the 13 August 2007 at Liverpool One, the key development of Liverpool City Centre to mark the 2008 European City of Culture.

Laing O'Rourke Construction Ltd has been fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £10,000 costs, after pleading guilty to a charge brought under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 Section 2(1) in that they failed to ensure the health and safety of their employees during the construction work.

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Employee Injured by Scaffolding

A Hampshire company has been fined after a scaffolding pole fell on to an employee.

Peter Ernest Jones Ltd, based in Clanfield, Hampshire contravened Regulation 10 of the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996. The company pleaded guilty and was fined £5,000 and required to pay the full costs of £1,543.20.

The prosecution followed an incident at a construction site, a development of new and converted houses, in Southsea on 27 February 2007. A worker crossed the site, to make tea, when a five foot scaffold pole fell on him from a scaffold being dismantled. There was no segregation between scaffolding work and other site workers. The employee suffered severe injuries including partial paralysis. A year and a half later, it is still unclear if he will ever regain his health.

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Work at Height Fine

The HSE is reminding access platform operators of the need to take safety seriously when planning work at height, particularly on a public highway. The warning follows the prosecution of a York construction contractor and one of its employees after two men fell from a mobile elevated working platform (MEWP) - known as a 'cherry picker' - whilst they were working at the side of the A19 in Bootham, York.

Employee Karl Thackrah was fined £2,500 and costs of £3,500 at York Crown Court after pleading guilty to breaching Section 7(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

At an earlier hearing on 4 September 2008, William Birch and Sons Ltd of Osbaldwick, York, was fined £12,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,500 after pleading guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the same Act.

On 2 August 2007 Karl Thackrah and Chris Cook, the platform's hirer, fell from the elevating work platform which they were using to access the first floor of Mr Cook's house in Bootham in order to touch up paintwork.

The MEWP was sited at the side of the A19 without the necessary warning road signs to indicate that the working platform was projecting into the carriageway. Members of the public witnessed both men - Mr Thackrah and Mr Cook - being seriously injured as they were thrown out of the platform which was at first floor level, onto the road side when their access platform was struck by a passing lorry.

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