

KEEP IT SAFE

BFFF QUARTERLY HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

OCTOBER 2008 EDITION



BRITISH
FROZEN FOOD
FEDERATION

Welcome

Welcome to the new BFFF quarterly Health and Safety newsletter 'Keep it Safe'.

Many of you will have noticed the launch of our new health and safety column in 'the bulletin'. The bulletin will contain headline information on health and safety topics, 'Keep it Safe' will provide more comprehensive information relevant to our industry.

This edition will include information on the following topics:

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We do hope you enjoy our improved health and safety information service. Please contact Joanna Hancock at the BFFF offices on 01400 283096 or e mail joannahancock@bfff.co.uk if you would like to raise any health and safety issues.



1. Legislative Update

i. BFFF Seminar on Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

On Tuesday 8 July 2008, Fiona Carter and Nina Best of Browne Jacobson Solicitors presented a seminar to BFFF members on the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.

This new Act makes it possible for companies to be prosecuted for a new offence of "corporate manslaughter", when the actions (or lack of action) of senior management contribute to a fatal accident.

Browne Jacobson explained how the new Act would work, set out the likely penalties for failing to comply, gave a history of causes of injury in food and drink manufacture, and gave practical tips to attendees on how best to manage the risks of prosecution. The seminar was well attended and there was some lively debate!

If you missed it, here is a brief summary of some of the issues discussed at the seminar.

The Act

A company will be guilty of the offence under the Act if it can be shown that the way in which the company manages or organises its activities causes a person's death, and amounts to a gross breach of a duty of care to the deceased.

However an organisation is only guilty of the offence if the way in which its activities

are managed or organised by senior management is a substantial element of the breach.

Therefore the way in which senior management organises company activities assumes particular significance. However "senior management" is widely defined so as to catch anyone who plays a significant role in the making of decisions about how the whole or a substantial part of an organisation's activities are to be managed or organised, or the actual managing of those activities.

Although the offence under the Act does not apply to individuals it does apply to companies, partnerships and certain public bodies.

Duties of Care

Relevant duties of care are duties owed under the law of negligence, including duties owed by a company as an employer, as an occupier of premises, as the keeper of any plant or vehicle, and other such duties in negligence owed by a business, which carries on activity on a commercial basis.

Gross Breach

In order for the offence to be committed the breach of duty of care must be "gross". This means it must fall far below the required standard, which could reasonably be expected of the organisation in the circumstances.

A Jury, in determining this question, will consider the evidence as a whole, including

any failures to comply with relevant health and safety legislation. They are likely to give particular weight to any institutionally tolerated breaches of legislation.

Penalties

The range of penalties which may be imposed include an **unlimited fine**, plus an order requiring the company to remedy the identified breaches, plus significantly, an order to publicise the conviction. This would be in addition to the inevitable publicity which will be generated if senior management are required to testify in Court.

Current proposals are that fines for the offence of corporate manslaughter will be set by reference to a company's turnover, ranging between 2% and 10% of a company's annual turnover. A serious fine for this offence could therefore potentially be catastrophic for a business.

Key Issues under Health and Safety Legislation

The new Act supplements but does not replace the range of existing offences which may be committed under Health and Safety legislation. In addition, although the Act does not provide for personal liability, individual company officers and managers may still be personally prosecuted under section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Steps you can take

Many companies are viewing the introduction of the Act as a trigger to review their existing health and safety policies, risk assessments, crisis management policies and insurance cover.

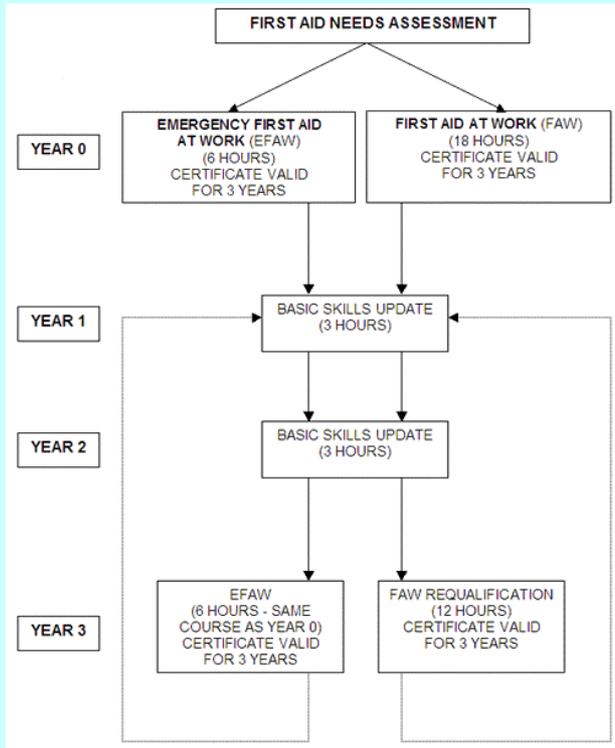
Key steps which can be taken now include:

- Ensure procedures are in place for information to be reported to the Board and for an effective response to be made in relation to health and safety;
- Raise awareness of health and safety issues in your business and create a positive culture;
- Ensure structures are in place to identify and manage risks;
- Put in place systems to ensure that recommendations and instructions are being implemented;
- Root out unsafe habits and ensure staff awareness;
- Implement a crisis management system for when or if things do go wrong;
- Review liability insurance to ensure that it will cover legal costs for such a prosecution.

ii. Review of the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981

The first amendments to the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations in more than 25 years will come into effect in October 2009. The changes affect the training requirements for first aiders and employer duty holders will need to implement the new requirements from this date.

HSE recently conducted a consultation exercise on draft guidance for employers and first aid training providers to support the changes and the following flow chart shows courses to be completed over a 3-year certification period for emergency first aid at work and first aid at work. The dotted line indicates the route to be taken in subsequent years after completion of the relevant course at year 3.



Employers will not be required to retrain all their first aiders as soon as the implementation date is reached.

First aiders with a valid first aid at work (FAW) certificate will only enter the new arrangements when their certificate expires.

Detailed guidance for employers will be available as a revision of the current document produced by HSE: First Aid at Work- The Health and Safety (First- Aid) Regulations 1981- Approved Code of practice and guidance L74. Within this it is only the guidance that is being revised, the Regulations and Approved Code of practice will remain the same. This publication will be available by the 1st October 2009.

For further updates on the guidance visit the HSE web site [here](#).

Don't chance it

CHANGE IT

2. HSE Campaigns

Each year HSE plans a series of campaigns based on particular health and safety topics aimed at reducing the incidence of work-related fatal and major injuries.

During each campaign, Inspectors visiting premises will focus on the key campaign areas and assess the standards, offer advice and enforce applicable legislation. It is also common during major campaigns that certain businesses will be targeted for inspection based on their activity profile i.e. if their work area is relevant to the current campaign.

Within this section of keeping it safe, we will inform you of the proposed campaign profile for the forthcoming year. Some of these details may change as the priorities change within the HSE, however the information will provide you with the main areas of focus in the near future.

i. What HSE inspectors will be looking at during 2008/09

HSE visits to food manufacturing sites will concentrate particularly on the following:

- [Manual handling/ musculoskeletal injuries](#)
- [Slips and trips](#)
- [Workplace transport](#)
- [Falls from height](#)
- [Occupational asthma](#)
- [Safeguarding packaging machines and conveyors](#)

Other topics covered at HSE visits during 2008/09 may include the following:

- [Noise](#)
- [Occupational dermatitis](#)
- [Work-related stress](#)
- [Entry to confined spaces](#)

ii. Asbestos- the hidden killer

During October and November 2008, HSE will be running a campaign to target tradesmen who are still at risk from exposure to asbestos. This campaign will include relevant information for tradesmen/ maintenance teams to improve awareness to the risk of exposure to asbestos. The campaign launches on the 13th October when the HSE web pages and campaign material will be available.

Click [here](#) for further information about the risks from asbestos.



iii. Future Events

During the course of the year, HSE has significant involvement in several events. We have taken the opportunity to highlight below two events that will be taking place in October and may be of particular interest to members. The full events calendar for HSE is available from the [HSE campaigns web pages](#).

Annual Conference- Occupational Health and Safety in Food Manufacturer (8-9th October 2008)

Following the success of earlier years the Food and drink manufacturing health and safety forum and the Food and Drink Group of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) will be running another two-day conference in October 2008.

The conference programme will cover important and topical issues such as machinery safety including machinery/plant interventions, workplace transport including lift trucks, slips prevention, manual handling/ MSD, accident investigation, safety risk assessment, occupational health priorities, stress and mental health, occupational health risk assessment, updates on multicultural issues and the 'Recipe for Safety' supervisors' training pack.

The conference is aimed at a wide audience- directors, factory managers, site managers, plant designers, health and safety officers, occupational health professionals, HR/ personnel managers, process development managers, technical managers, supervisors etc.

The full conference programme and booking form is available [here](#).

European Week- October 20th – 24th

As reported in the last edition of keep it safe, this year the campaign will focus on risk assessment. During European week itself, there will be a number of activities based on the campaign theme.

EEF, the manufacturers organisation is running a series of regional workshops on risk assessment in partnership with HSE in October. The workshops will help to dispel many of the myths and communicate sensible risk management in practice. [Click here](#) for further details of the event locations and how to book a place.

More details on European Week and the associated event is available from the [HSE web site](#)

3. Guidance

i. Health and Safety injury rate statistics for BFFF Membership sectors Years 2005-2006

BFFF is delighted to provide the membership with the first national statistics on health and safety injuries specific to our membership sectors. As many of you may be aware, general high-level statistics are available through the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) web site. However, BFFF has been working with HSE to extract statistical information from their national database of reported incidents based on the relevant areas for our industry.

All the statistics presented below have been provided by HSE, grouped into sectors using the UK Standard Industrial Classification

(SIC) codes for the Economic activities of each membership sector.

A breakdown of the particular SIC codes utilised to determine each membership sector is available from BFFF offices.

HSE has derived the injury statistics from their own national records, and the employment numbers for each sector used within the background information, are taken from the workplace analysis data from the Annual Business Inquiry 2005.

It should be noted that HSE information is based only on reported incidents and as with any dissected information, the accuracy is determined by accurate human input. Therefore we would encourage all members to utilize this information as a guide only.

SECTOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION

SECTOR	Rate of injury per 100,000 employees for the sector (Years 2005/06)								
	Fatal Injuries			Non-fatal major injuries			Over 3 day injuries		
	Best	Average	Worst	Best	Average	Worst	Best	Average	Worst
Producers	0	0	0	95.7	192.3	247.5	588.2	995.0	1267.2
Wholesalers	0	0	0	49.5	78.7	123.8	186.8	319.2	395.9
Retailers	0	0.1	3.3	18.4	101.2	110.1	53.9	511.2	538.9



Freight transport and the storage of frozen and refrigerated goods

HSE has provided BFFF with the number of injuries for the freight transport and the storage of frozen and refrigerated goods employment sectors. However, the employment figures for these sections are not available. Therefore for our members' interest we have enclosed the number of injuries for each of these sectors.

SECTOR	Number of injuries for the Sector (Years 2005/06)		
	Fatal	Non- Fatal major injuries	Over 3 day injuries
Freight transport	11	1542	7795
Storage of frozen and refrigerated goods	0	12	54

Notes relating to the statistics

1. Injuries

Injuries are reported and defined under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995. These include injuries to employees, self- employed people and members of the public. The information available under RIDDOR 95 includes three categories of severity of injury to employees: fatal injuries, defined major injuries and other injuries leading to more than three days absence (over 3 day).

2. Employment Figures

Workplace analysis data is taken from the Annual Business Inquiry 2005.



ii. Work at height within freezer environments

BFFF has been working with HSE for some time to resolve the current issue on work at height within freezer environments. As many of you will be aware, following a health and safety issue raised by the membership, BFFF circulated a Health and safety survey in order to establish the current working practices within our industry with regards to working at height within cold stores. We had an excellent response to the survey and were able to build a clear picture of current practices. Our survey showed that the majority of companies were unable to comply with current HSE guidance in this area and non-integrated working platforms/permissioning controlled working platforms were being used by the industry for planned work.

The reasoning behind the non-compliance does vary across the membership due to the diverse nature of each company's individual circumstances. However, the lack of current state of the art technology for use within a frozen environment is a significant factor.

We have held numerous meetings with HSE to present our case, the most recent taking place on the 15th July. During this meeting HSE stated that they feel that there is merit to the arguments that we have put forward with regards to the frozen environment. They have agreed that there should be separate guidance for our sector, providing companies with a hierarchal approach to selecting their work at height equipment for their particular use if work at height is necessary. This guidance should provide examples of the alternative approaches companies must consider and evaluate before opting to utilize a non integrated working platform.

BFFF will be presenting the draft industry guidance to HSE in September 2008. HSE will then be reviewing the contents internally and consulting with LACORS (Local authorities coordinators of regulatory services). Therefore we hope to have further developments in the next few months.

In the mean time, there is no change to the current legislative parameters surrounding work at height. Furthermore, HSE are looking to the forklift attachment providers and the work at height equipment providers to work towards a technological solution for our industry for the future.

If you would like any detailed information on this matter, including our work so far, please contact me directly on 01400 283096 or joannahancock@bfff.co.uk.

I shall look forward to hopefully updating you with clear direction for the industry in the forthcoming months.





THE MYTH

HSE has banned stepladders

THE REALITY

We have not banned stepladders - nor have we banned ladders! Despite this, the allegation is regularly repeated and some firms have fallen for the myth and acted upon it.

For straightforward, short-duration work stepladders and ladders can be a good option, but you wouldn't want to be wobbling about on them doing complex tasks for long periods.

A large number of workers are seriously injured or killed using ladders and stepladders each year. So: Yes - we want people to use the right equipment for the job. Yes - there are some common-sense rules for using them safely. But no - we have not banned them!

iii. The Cost of Accidents

We would like to highlight to members the availability of a useful training DVD produced by the SGB group titled 'The cost of Accidents'. Although this film has been produced by the scaffolding industry, it is a useful resource to outline the concepts of the Accident triangle, Causation and the ultimate costs of unplanned accidents in any industry.

This short film is hard hitting, and encourages people to consider the very real potential for accidents in their every day environment. The DVD is available free

from SGB, however they do ask companies to consider a donation to Cancer Research UK. To obtain your copy of the DVD please contact SGB Health & Safety Team Administrator, Sharon Barrett on e mail sbarrett2@sgb.co.uk.

iv. Managing ammonia refrigeration in the food industry

The Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) held an event in June on managing ammonia refrigeration in the food industry. The event covered recent developments in ammonia refrigeration and current legislative requirements from risk assessment to emergency procedures. Members should be aware that ambulance services generally require an injured person to be de-contaminated prior to entering the ambulance. Therefore all members with ammonia plants are encouraged to contact their local fire brigade to review their emergency procedures.

The presentations from this event are available through the following [link](#).

v. Workplace transport checklist

HSE has revised the useful site inspection-Workplace Transport Checklist. The checklist is a guide to employers on what they should consider when trying to reduce the risk from vehicles in the workplace and can be used as a useful tool in most workplaces.

The check list includes questions on the management and supervision of workplace transport risk, Site layout and internal traffic routes and unloading activities.

The updated checklist is available [here](#).



vi. Example risk assessment for a road haulage company

The last edition of 'keep it safe' highlighted the new '**Example risk assessment for cold storage warehousing**' developed by HSE in consultation with BFFF and other industry stakeholders.

Continuing to promote sensible risk management, the HSE have now developed an 'Example risk assessment for a road haulage company'. This example shows the kind of approach a small business might take to their risk assessment. It works through examples of hazards including unfamiliarity with risks at customer sites, falls from vehicles, slips and trips and manual handling.

The example risk assessment can be viewed on the HSE web site [here](#).

vii. 'Shattered Lives' Campaign- Slips, trips and falls

Following this extensive HSE campaign earlier this year, HSE has developed a Slips and Trips e Learning Package 'STEP' which will be freely available in the autumn of this year.

STEP is an easy way to learn about slips and trips, how they are caused, why preventing them is important and how to tackle them.

It includes quizzes, videos, animations, case studies and interactive sequences to enhance the learning experience. Food Manufacturing is one of the industries that this package has been specifically designed for.

To find out more information and to register your interest click [here](#).

viii. Musculoskeletal disorders- Quick exposure check

Work related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs)- usually upper limb, neck and back problems, are a significant problem in food and drink manufacturing comprising almost 60% of the cases of occupational ill health. A Quick Exposure Check (QEC) is a practical tool for individual physical work activities to be assessed in collaboration with the worker. It has been designed to be quick, easy to use and does not require extensive training before use.

- [QEC assessment form, scoring sheet and guidance](#)

More detailed guidance on work related upper limb disorders (WRULDs) can be found in the HSE publication HSG60.

ix. Noise

Noise is one of the main causes of occupational ill health in the food industry. Exposure to noise at work can cause irreversible hearing damage. It is one of the commonest health problems and can be difficult to detect as the effects build up gradually over time.

Most food and drink industries have processes that emit high noise levels exceeding the 80dB (A) and 85dB(A) levels at which employers are required to take action under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. For example the processes listed below are particularly associated with high noise levels:

- Product impact on hoppers: 90-100dB(A)
- Wrapping, cutting wrap, bagging etc: 85-95dB(A)
- Bowl choppers: > Pneumatic noise and compressed air: 85-95dB(A)

- Saws and cutting machinery: 85- 107 dB(A)
- Blast chillers/ freezers: 85- 107 dB(A)
- Packaging machinery: 85- 95 dB(A)

Protection is best achieved by controlling noise at source and hearing protection should always be a last resort. HSE has developed web pages providing Noise control case studies, which offer real examples of how some companies have reduced noise at work in various industries. The most recent case studies are available [here](#).

HSE has also developed a series of Exposure calculators and ready- reckoners. The Noise exposure calculators can help you work out your daily and weekly noise exposure and estimate the performance of hearing protection. The noise exposure ready reckoners allow you to estimate daily or weekly noise exposure. The exposure calculators and ready- reckoners are available directly from the HSE web site.

x. REACH- Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals

REACH is the new system for controlling chemicals in Europe. It became law in the UK on the 1st June 2007 and creates new duties for many businesses based on the part they play in making, selling or using chemicals. Many of our members will be users of chemicals e.g. they may be used to keep machinery operating and your premises clean and as such REACH may have an impact on your business.

Under REACH, chemicals that are manufactured or imported into the EU will need to be registered with the new European Chemical Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki. Unless you make or import chemicals yourself, as a user it is highly unlikely that you will need to register chemicals. If you do make or import chemicals then HSE has detailed guidance available on their [REACH](#) web pages.

As a user, it is important to determine the chemicals that you use in your business, the quantities and how they are used. Generally, if you are using chemicals or mixtures of them in a way that is expected then REACH probably won't mean significant changes for you.

However, if your business relies on using unusual chemicals you may need to be sure that these will still be available in the future. You should consider contacting your supplier to find out if the chemical(s) in question will be registered by whoever makes or imports it.

It is possible that some companies for business reasons may decide not to register chemicals. If so you may need to find an alternative source or re-think your processes.

If you use your chemical in a novel way that is perhaps not expected then you will need to consider letting your supplier know. This use will need to be considered for registration by the supplier. If you don't want to let your supplier know about this use then you don't have to but it will mean that you will have to let the ECHA know about this use and possibly have to submit your own risk assessment.

For more information on REACH including the UK Competent Authority details visit the HSE [REACH](#) web pages.

xi. **New and revised HSE guidance available**

HSE continually revises their guidance in line with changes in regulations and improved working practices. The following publications have been recently released which may be of interest to members:

- **L73 A guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995**

This new third edition contains the same regulations (with minor changes to regulation 2) but brings the associated guidance up to date, particularly in relation to the changes in reporting arrangements and the need to use the Incident Contact Centre (ICC). Other amendments have been made to reflect changes in legislation.

Also the introduction now contains a useful 'at a glance' list of reportable major injuries, dangerous occurrences and diseases.

The guide is available from HSE books priced at £11.95 ISBN 9780717662906. [Click here](#) to order.

- **L 22 Safe use of work equipment. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998**

This is the third edition of the PUWER 98 approved code of practice and guidance (ACOP) and has been updated to reflect the latest legislation. References throughout have been updated to include the most recent publications available, and

obsolete information has been removed. The ACOP and substance of the guidance remains unchanged.

This book is for anyone with responsibility directly or indirectly for work equipment and its use. PUWER 98 applies to the provision of all work equipment, including mobile and lifting equipment and it applies to all workplaces and work situations where the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 applies.

The ACOP is available from HSE books priced at £11.95 ISBN 9780717662951. [Click here](#) to order.

- **HSG 218 Managing the causes of work-related stress**

Work-related stress is a major cause of occupational ill health, poor productivity and human error.

It can result in sickness absence, high staff turnover, poor performance and a possible increase in accidents due to human error.

This book is aimed primarily at organisations that employ 50 or more people, but smaller businesses may also find it helpful. It is aimed at managers or staff with responsibility for managing the potential causes of work-related stress in your organisations. This guide works through a step-by-step approach to managing stress using the management standards.

The book is available from HSE books priced at £10.95 ISBN 9780717662739. [Click here](#) to order.

4. Enforcement Action

As part of our partnership work with the Local Authority (LA) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), we are able to provide information to all members regarding relevant prosecutions on Health and Safety related matters.

For your information, we have stated below brief details regarding some of the latest examples of prosecutions categorised into some of the **main causes of injury in the food and drink industry**.



Slip injury at food factory results in prosecution

A food company was fined a total of £7500 and required to pay £1692 costs after pleading guilty to two health and safety offences under Regulation 12(3) of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations. On 17 January 2006 an employee at the company's Portishead site in Bristol slipped at the doorway of a freezer and suffered a twisted ankle which he reported to the company. Two days later he slipped again at the doorway of another freezer and fractured his ankle.

In both instances the freezer doors had not been maintained and damaged door seals and damaged floors had allowed water vapour to freeze on the floor both inside and immediately outside the doors.

The risks associated with ice build-up at freezer doors and employees slipping on that ice had been known to the company for over a year.

Following the accidents the freezers were replaced with new models.



HSE warns companies to prevent falls from vehicles following fatal incident

The HSE is warning companies that they must ensure the safety of drivers who load and unload goods. This follows an incident where HGV driver Nigel Sargeant, age 46, of Boston fell 15 feet from his trailer and suffered fatal head injuries.

Saint Gobain Building Distribution Ltd were fined a total of £120,000 and ordered to pay £51,000 costs by Lincoln Crown court on the 23rd June after being found guilty of breaching health and safety law.

Boston based Calders and Grandidge Ltd (part of Saint Gobain) manufacture and supply wooden telegraph poles. In 2005 they decided to supply metal poles as a new product line. On 5th August, the day before the first full load of such poles were to be dispatched, Mr Sargeant was concerned about the height of a load and climbed onto a vehicle to attempt to lower it. While doing so, he fell approximately 15 feet and suffered fatal head injuries.

The charges were brought under regulation 5(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 for failing to have arrangements in place to manage the introduction of new products and systems and regulation 3(1)(a) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 for failing to perform a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for the loading of steel poles onto trailers.



Transport company loses appeal against fine following serious incident

Harris transport lost their appeal against the £28,000 fine handed to them on the 23rd January after an incident left an employee permanently disabled. The company now have to pay the fine in full and have incurred additional court costs of £5,300.

Lee McHahon suffered severe injuries to both legs when he was run over by a forklift truck whilst working at Harris Transport in Southampton. An HSE investigation discovered a systematic breakdown in Harris Transport's health and safety management.

The incident occurred despite Lee McHahon wearing appropriate high visibility clothing. At the time, very dark conditions were reported, because the workplace lighting was deficient, and there were general maintenance problems with the forklift trucks. There was also no separation between vehicles and pedestrians, creating a dangerous situation in an environment where the lack of lighting restricted visibility.

Additional factors were that peripheral equipment on the forklift trucks created a number of blind spots and drivers had little or no training with new forklift trucks.



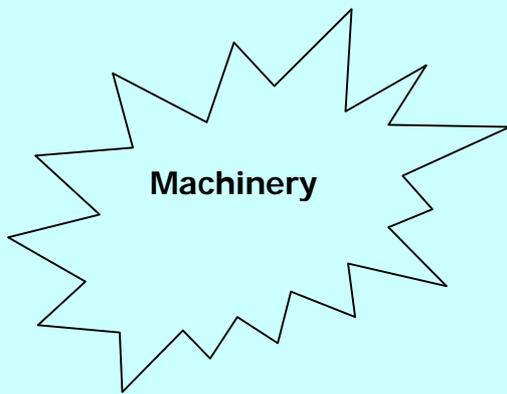
Distribution company prosecuted after an accident crushed a worker

A distribution company FGF was fined £40,000 and ordered to pay more than £10,000 in costs at Leeds Crown Court after an accident that crushed a worker, leaving him paralysed and wheelchair dependent.

The company stores and distributes insulation materials and the worker was injured when a stacked pallet of insulation fell onto him during stock picking.

The court heard that the lead investigator had found risk assessments were inadequate and individuals within the company with health and safety responsibilities were not sufficiently trained or competent. Likewise they had failed to heed earlier warnings about the adequacy of their health and safety arrangements.

The company pleaded guilty to one charge under section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.



HSE warns companies to manage health and safety concerns following Norfolk prosecution

HSE has warned employers to ensure they manage health and safety risks in the workplace, following the prosecution of a Thetford company.

A meat processing company in Thetford was fined £265,000 with £21,653.35 costs following several breaches of health and safety regulations.

On 4th October 2005, an employee had three of his fingers amputated in a machine used to seal plastic food packaging.

The HSE investigation identified that the machine was not adequately guarded and the company was found in breach of section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Then on 28th Nov 2005 self employed contractor Korim Richardson suffered a severe electric shock while changing a light fitting at the same site. Mr Richardson was working on a ladder at the time of the incident and the electric surge caused him to swing back with the ladder leading to cracked bones on his shoulder. The HSE investigation identified a failure to maintain the electrical system at the site breaching of section 4 (2) of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

Finally, on 26th February 2006, the company was served a Prohibition Notice after allowing their employees and contractors to access wooden walkways over a suspended ceiling at the site. The walkway did not have full guardrails at the sides so employees and contractors risked falling some 60ft through the ceiling onto the production floor. The meat processing company was found in breach of section 4(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The contractor was also sentenced at an earlier hearing.

HSE inspector, Steve Gill said:

'This company has received fines consistent with the failure to manage health and safety issues at their site in Thetford. The company exposed their employees to potentially dangerous situations and HSE will not hesitate to take action against those who fall short of the law in such a way.'



Loughborough food manufacturer fined £4,000 after explosion leaves employee disabled.

HSE has warned companies to properly maintain pressure systems after a man lost his leg following an explosion at a food factory in Loughborough.

On 12th June 2007, an employee of Authentic World Cuisine sustained multiple injuries when the door of an autoclave (known as a retort, or pressure cooker) exploded under pressure midway through a cooking cycle. The detached circular steel door struck him and sent him eight metres across the factory causing multiple fractures. He also sustained burns from the hot contents of the vessel. As a result of the incident, his leg was amputated.

The company was fined £4,000 after pleading guilty to breaching regulation 12 of the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 for failing to ensure that the company's pressure vessel was maintained in a state of good repair.

