

CASE STUDY: COMPANY FINED FOR SCISSOR LIFT TRAINING FAILURES



A Merseyside company has been sentenced for failing to properly train staff on how to use equipment that enables them to work at height.

Knowsley-based Firesafe Installations Limited uses mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs), such as a scissor lift, to access high work areas.

Southwark Crown Court in London heard that when a company employee was trapped between the guardrail of a scissor lift and some overhead ducting a colleague was unable to release him and bring him down because he was unaware of how to use the emergency controls.

Shaun Scurry, 39, of Kirkby, tragically died following the incident at the Westfield shopping centre in Stratford, East London, on 9 December 2009.

The court was told that although Firesafe Installations cannot be held directly accountable for the death, the company should have ensured staff knew how to operate the equipment they were using. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated the fatality and established that familiarisation training was inadequate. Industry guidance dictates that such training is essential for anyone using MEWPs, and should be routinely assessed because controls vary between different makes and models.

Firesafe Installations Limited, of Security House, Caddick Road, Knowsley Industrial Park South, was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay £29,000 in costs after pleading guilty to a single breach of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

After the hearing HSE Inspector Eileen Gascoigne said:

“This tragic case underlines the importance of familiarisation training – not only for direct operatives, but also those who may be required to take control in the event of an emergency.

“There is clear HSE and industry guidance on what is expected of companies working with MEWPs in this regard, and the failing of Firesafe Installations Limited is a clear example of why it is so important.”

Further information on working safely with MEWPs can be found on the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk/falls/wait/mewp-multi.htm