

## CASE STUDY: FALL FROM HEIGHT WHILST CHANGING LIGHT FITTINGS



### **Summary**

A meat supplier was prosecuted after a worker fell while working on the lighting of a large chiller room.

The maintenance engineer was replacing light fittings in a large chiller. He was working from a stepladder set on top of a wooden board spanning metal rafters, approximately three metres from the ground.

He and a colleague accessed the rafters and board using a cherry picker, but the board gave way. The engineer fell to the ground below, whilst his colleague managed to grab onto one of the rafters and make his way back into the cherry picker.

The engineer suffered a fractured vertebra and a fractured heel bone. He was off work for a number of months and although he returned to work, he found he was unable to carry out the job he was doing because of his injuries and subsequently resigned from his post.

The investigation found that the work had not been properly planned, supervised or carried out in a safe manner. Although the company was using a cherry picker, it was not suitable for the task because it was not tall enough to reach the light fittings.

### **Action**

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. They were fined £25,000 and ordered to pay costs of £12,361.

### **Advice**

Following the court case the HSE Inspector said:

“Work at height is a high risk activity that must be properly planned. Changing light bulbs was a foreseeable task, yet the company had never considered how they would, or should, carry it out.

“The activity should have been subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, which would have identified the precautions needed to carry out the task safely, including selecting appropriate access equipment. The company simply instructed this individual to carry out the task and left him to his own devices. The resulting injuries were life changing.”