

## CASE STUDY: INTERNATIONAL MANUFACTURER FINED AFTER WORKER IS IMPALED



One of the world's largest producers of adhesives for the construction industry has been fined after a worker died when he was pinned against a forklift truck by a reversing lorry in Halesowen. The employee died following the incident in the transport yard at Mapei UK Limited's Steel Park Road base on 1 July, 2010. He had been asked to empty a machine, using a forklift truck to move a skip and then empty the contents of the skip into a bag that was held within a cage. Wolverhampton Crown Court today (5 December) heard that a lorry driver was asked to move his vehicle by another driver so they could access the loading area. Around the same time, the employee had left the cab of his forklift truck and moved to the front of the forklift truck. The lorry driver reversed the 18-tonne rigid-back truck, unknowingly pinning the employee between the back of the lorry and the cage which was resting on the forks of his forklift truck. His head was impaled against the forks, killing him instantly.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation revealed significant safety failings by Mapei UK Ltd. HSE found they had failed to segregate pedestrians and vehicles adequately in order to organise, supervise, manage and run their transport yard.

The yard did not have defined traffic routes or walkways, there were no ground markings and the yard was open with no physical restrictions on movement.

A system was in place to restrict vehicle movement whereby all drivers handed in their vehicle keys on arrival, but this didn't apply to all vehicles. In this case, the lorry driver had not handed his keys in, meaning he did not have to seek Mapei UK Ltd's authority or assistance when moving his vehicle.

HSE found Mapei UK Ltd considered the transport area a low priority in terms of risk, despite previous independent safety reports telling them the opposite.

Mapei UK Limited of Steel Park Road, Halesowen, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act and was fined a total of £173,332. The amount of costs to be paid will be agreed at a later date.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Mahesh Mahey said:

"Numerous health and safety failings by Mapei UK Ltd led to this tragic incident in which the employee needlessly lost his life. The dangers associated with vehicle movements are obvious and have been highlighted by HSE for many years."