

CASE STUDY: WASTE PRODUCT FALLS FROM FORKLIFT TRUCK



Summary

A snack foods company has been prosecuted after a 400 kilogramme block of compacted snack waste fell on a worker, breaking his leg.

The waste from a production line ran off into another machine and then, in the form of pellets, into a magnum bin - a large plastic box with slots underneath for the forks of a forklift truck. The pellets, which solidify into a large block, could not be dug out by hand, so a forklift is used to lift and turnover the magnum so the block fell out.

As the block was lifted into a wheeled bin to be emptied, it became stuck at the top. When the two men attempted to move the bin, it tipped over causing the block of pellets to fall onto the employee, breaking his leg. He was off work for 15 weeks but has since returned to work with the company.

The Court was told that the work had not been properly planned, supervised or carried out in a safe manner.

Action

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 3(1) of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and Regulation 8(1) of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998. They were fined a total of £20,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.

Advice

After the hearing the HSE Inspector said: "The task of devising a method to dispose of the waste pellets had been given to an agency worker who did not have the experience or training required to allow him to properly plan how the task should be carried out. As a result it was carried out without supervision and, as the injuries to the employee suggest, the task was not carried out in a safe manner. "The company also failed to properly assess the risks associated with the task, which should have formed an important part of the planning process. As such the risks were not fully appreciated by those workers involved in the task, and a man suffered serious injury."