

CASE STUDY: SAFETY IS EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITY WHEREVER STAFF WORK



Two companies have been heavily fined following the death of two workers in what a HSE inspector described as possibly the most horrific case he had ever had to deal with.

The two young men, from different companies, were both killed when carrying out maintenance work on a conveyor belt at a Merseyside factory.

During work on the conveyor, it suddenly and unexpectedly started to operate, dragging both men into the machinery and causing catastrophic fatal injuries.

The HSE told Liverpool Crown Court that it had found multiple failings by both companies to properly assess the risks associated with the work.

The factory had not properly assessed the risks associated with the work on the conveyor and did not have in place a proper process for managing contractors nor a procedure for isolating dangerous machinery. In addition, it had failed to train or check the competence of workers.

The employer of the young men had not ensured that the site its workers were visiting had sufficient risk assessments and processes in place and had failed to ensure its workers and contractors had adequate training for the tasks to be carried out.

The factory business was fined £220,000, with costs of £107,000. The employer of the men was fined £190,000, with costs of £107,000.

Following the case, HSE's Principal Inspector Mike Sebastian said: "Carrying out straightforward risk assessments is about protecting workers from serious harm, suffering life-changing injuries or, in this tragic case, death. If both companies had put in place the simple steps to protect their workers' safety, these two young men would still be with us today."