

Sheeting and unsheeting vehicles work at height

WHAT HAPPENED

A Suffolk logistics company has been fined for safety failings after a lorry driver fell from a flat-bed trailer at a company warehouse in Felixstowe.

The 60 year-old worker from mid Glamorgan, who does not wish to be named, broke his hip in three places and needed two steel pins inserted to help repair the damage following the incident on 6 February 2013.

He was reliant on crutches for three months and was unable to return to work for a further three months.

The company was today (29 April) prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after an investigation found that more could and should have been done to prevent his fall.

Ipswich Magistrates' Court heard that the driver, from a company in Wales, was collecting pallets of bricks from the warehouse for onward transport. He had been asked to cover and secure the load to his flat-bed trailer with a protective sheet but as he walked along the edge of the trailer to pull the

sheet across, he slipped and fell 1.5 metres to the ground.

HSE found the space occupied by the load meant the trailer's edge protection barriers could not be raised. Despite instructing him to cover the load, the logistics company failed to provide safeguards to prevent him from falling from the trailer.

HSE subsequently served the company with an enforcement notice requiring them to put measures in place to prevent workers falling in similar circumstances. They complied by providing two full length gantry platforms designed to fit down the side of the trailer and provide edge protection for working on trailers of this type.

The logistics company was fined £15,000 and ordered to pay £4,285 in costs after pleading guilty to a single breach of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Edward Crick, said:

“This worker has suffered significant injuries because the logistics company did not provide any form of protection to safeguard visiting drivers from falling from the trailers.

“Their policy was to ensure that flatbed trailer loads were sheeted. They provided a dedicated area to do this, but failed to provide anything to prevent falls.

“They complied with an Improvement Notice requiring this, and had this measure been in place at the time, these injuries would have been prevented.”

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

Have we completed a risk assessment for this activity?

When conducting the risk assessment have we given demonstrable consideration to the ‘hierarchy of controls’ for work at height? Reg.6

? Avoid the need to work at height where possible (eg provide ground -based systems for sheeting, valves etc);

? Where work has to be carried out at height on a vehicle, where reasonably practicable provide platforms, guard rails and suitable ladders on the vehicle or if impracticable provide them at the site;
?

Where measures do not eliminate the risk of a fall, equipment should be provided to minimise the distance and consequences eg mats, airbags, fall

protection PPE or where this is not reasonably practicable;

? Provide additional training instruction or take other additional and suitable measures to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause injury

Are all drivers, suppliers and trade collect aware of onsite rules when accessing the rear of their vehicle's for loading, unloading or sheeting?

LOCATION:
ACTIVITY:
SUB ACTIVITY:

TRANSPORT

ALERT STATUS:
DATE ISSUED:
INCIDENT No:

Normal
01/05/2014
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