



STACS of NEWS

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EMPLOYEE CRUSHED BY DUMPER

A groundworks company has been fined after an employee suffered serious internal injuries while working in an excavation at a school.

The court heard how a site dumper was parked at a slight incline on a heap of excavated soil, adjacent to a partially backfilled trench. The dumper had been left unattended with the engine running when the failure of its handbrake caused it to roll forward into the trench and pin a worker against a pile of stacked concrete blocks. The worker suffered six broken ribs, a collapsed lung, multiple arm fractures and a broken nose.

An investigation by the HSE found the company had failed to regularly inspect and maintain the handbrake of the dumper, to ensure it remained effective. The soil heap had been placed too far back from the excavation, preventing it from acting as a safety barrier and there were no wheel stop blocks or chocks available for use by workers. The investigation also found the company failed to ensure this work was appropriately supervised and effectively monitored by management.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 5(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, and Section 22(2) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, and has been fined £23,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5220.65.

Speaking after the case, the HSE inspector said "This case highlights the importance of regularly inspecting and maintaining construction vehicles, including site dumpers, to ensure they do not deteriorate to the extent that they put people's safety at risk.

"In this case, the employee's life-threatening injuries could have been avoided if the company's management had regularly and effectively monitored and audited their safety management systems. Use of suitable stop blocks near the edge of the trench excavation, or use of wheel chocks, is one such method that may have prevented this incident, which could easily have been fatal."

CONSTRUCTION COMPANY FINED AFTER DEATH OF DUMPER DRIVER

A construction company has been fined following the death of a dumper driver.

The court heard how the employee was driving a forward tipping dumper onto the top of a spoil heap. The dumper became stuck on the edge of the spoil heap, and when the driver jumped off the vehicle, it flipped over striking him. He sustained serious head injuries which he died from at the scene.

An investigation by the HSE found that it was practice on this and other sites for dumpers to access spoil heaps with no barriers to prevent over-running. To compound the situation, an excavator had removed some of this particular spoil heap creating a sheer face.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2 (1) of The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined £200,000 plus a victim surcharge of £170 and ordered to pay costs of £5565.80.

Speaking after the hearing, the HSE inspector said: "Risks associated with the creation of spoil heaps had not been suitably and sufficiently assessed. Either the company should have decided on a safer method which avoided the need for the dumper to access spoil heaps (as they have done after the accident), or they should have introduced stricter management arrangements which would have included bunds at a safe distance from the edge."

WORKER INJURED BY DUMPER

A company has been sentenced after an untrained operator was injured when a six-tonne dumper fell on top of him.

The court heard how the operator was tipping material from excavation work alongside a barn at the top of an embankment, using a dumper. As the operator came around the corner of the barn to tip a load, the dumper became stuck. When he backed up slightly to gain traction, the dumper tipped over the edge of the embankment. The operator tried to jump clear, but the dumper landed upside down on top of him at the bottom of the embankment, trapping him and causing fractures to his right thigh, hip socket and vertebrae.

An investigation by the HSE found the company had failed to provide the operator with appropriate training for operating a dumper. The investigation also found the site manager had not been provided with suitable training for managing a site and to ensure that those operating under him, were doing so safely. Furthermore, no measures had been put into place to prevent dumpers from approaching or overrunning the edge of the embankment.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £26,667 with costs of £3,659.

Speaking after the hearing, the HSE inspector said: "Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary information, instruction and training to their workers in the safe system of working."

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