

ARTICLES: Lack of Guards and Emergency Stop Button Shreds Employees Hand to the Bone

A chicken-processing company has been criticised for failing to protect its employees following two serious incidents at its factory in Norfolk. Thetford Magistrates' Court heard that the first incident took place on 24 July 2009 at Crown Chicken Ltd's facility in Norwich. An employee was using a de-skinning machine, which is used to skin chicken carcasses, when his glove got caught and his hand was pulled into the blade. The skin on the back of his hand, from his knuckles to his wrist, was torn away from the underlying tissue.

The HSE found that the machine did not have adequate guards, or an emergency stop button. It also identified that the gloves provided for workers failed to give suitable protection. A Prohibition Notice was issued on 25 August 2009, which required the machine to be removed from service until safeguards were put in place.

On 2 December 2009, another employee severed a finger when his hand was crushed by the lifting mechanism of a forklift truck, as he stood on the forks to access the back of some refrigerated trailers. HSE inspector, Saffron Turnell, revealed that guidance from both the HSE and the forklift manufacturer warns that it is unsafe to stand on the forks of a forklift truck, but the company had not provided a safe way for workers to access the back of the trailers.

Crown Chicken Ltd appeared in court and was fined £4000 for each offence and ordered to pay £5500 in costs. After the hearing, inspector Turnell said: "These two incidents resulted in very serious and painful injuries to both men. What is more, both could easily have been avoided if Crown Chicken had taken the correct health and safety precautions.

Lack of Traffic Control within Clothing Warehouse Leads to Death of Worker

A forklift truck driver was killed when two vehicles collided at a clothing warehouse in Lancashire. Manchester Crown Court heard that the incident took place at Regatta Ltd's warehouse. Pdraig Ward was maneuvering a high-level man-rise forklift truck in a narrow aisle to collect stock. The cab of the truck was at its maximum height, enabling him to reach high shelving, when another forklift truck reversed down the aisle and collided with the vehicle. Mr Ward's truck overturned and the cab fell 30 metres to the ground. He died in hospital as a result of his injuries.

Trafford Council's environmental health officers visited the site and found the company did not have a safe system of work in place to prevent vehicles colliding when operating in narrow aisles. It also discovered a suitable risk assessment had not been undertaken, despite previous incidents of vehicle collisions at the premises. The firm had received previous warnings and formal legal notices from the council relating to the need to improve traffic management at the site.

On 6 February 2006, the council issued a Prohibition Notice, which ordered the firm to put a system in place to ensure only one vehicle is allowed to travel down an aisle at the same time. The company also received an Improvement Notice, which required it to carry out a risk assessment for vehicle movements at the warehouse.

Regatta was fined a total of £150,000 and £64,059 in costs. In mitigation, the company said it had no previous convictions and had complied with the enforcement notices. It has carried out a risk assessment and has installed sensors on forklifts so they immobilise if they enter the same aisle as another vehicle.

"Mr Ward's death could have been prevented if Regatta Limited had put in place safe systems of work, and carried out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, with regard to workplace transport. There was evidence that the company was aware of their duty to manage the safe operation of vehicles, but they failed to take appropriate action in this case.

Fatality at Everton FC's New Training Academy

Construction firm Kier North West has been fined £160,000 after a labourer fell to his death during the construction of Everton FC's new training academy. Karl Davis, 42, was working for Kier North West, part of the Kier Group, when the incident took place on 27 February 2007. He was clearing up waste from the first floor of a building at the Finch Lane site in Halewood, Merseyside ahead of a visit by the Everton players. He was placing debris into a rubbish chute, which had been attached to a guardrail by an open window frame, when the guardrail gave way and he fell headfirst to the ground. He was taken to hospital, where he

remained in a coma for three months, before dying as a result of his injuries. The HSE visited the site on the day of the incident and found that Kier North West had failed to ensure that the guardrail could hold the weight of the chute and the materials that were thrown down it. The company was issued a Prohibition Notice, which required work to stop until stable edge protection was put in place.

HSE inspector Robert Hodgkinson said: "What is incredibly sad about this incident is that a man lost his life when equipment installed to make the work safer failed. Kier North West should have planned and managed the use of the rubbish chute on the site to make sure it was safe. If Kier North West had ensured the rubbish chute was attached to a structure that could support its weight then Mr Davis would still be alive today."

Kier North West appeared at Liverpool Crown Court on 23 September and pleaded and was ordered to pay £43,993 in costs. Following the hearing, a statement from Kier Group said: "Kier appreciates and accepts that it is accountable for this tragic incident. The Group takes the health and safety of its workforce extremely seriously and has taken every opportunity to revisit and reinforce its site safety procedures. Our thoughts remain with Karl's family."

CHECK YOUR ARRANGEMENTS FOR:- Working at Height

What is Working at Height?

Health and Safety law states that working at height is relevant to any job where there is a risk of fall and injury. This can therefore be relevant to working off the back of a lorry unloading or loading, working on a platform or even working at ground level adjacent to an open area where there may be a risk of a fall ie, near an excavation or other open area (regardless of the height and fall distance).

The perception of work at height is that it often relates to tasks such as roof work or scaffolding. Whilst this is true to an extent, it is perhaps surprising that 59% of major injuries occur following a fall from height of less than two metres and 61% of over 3 day injuries occur within the service industry.

In 2005/06 falls from height accounted for 46 fatal accidents at work and around 3350 major injuries. They remain the single biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injury.

Risk Assessment

When working at height is necessary an assessment of the hazards and risks associated with that work needs to be carried out. Safe systems of work need to be clearly identified, communicated to the relevant operatives and effective control measures implemented and monitored throughout works.

Safe Access Arrangements

Making working at height safe is easy if:

- Adequate training has been given
- Working at height risk assessment has been carried out
- Safe working procedures have been established
- All employees involved in working at height have been consulted regarding all of the above
- Safe working equipment is used to reduce risks of fall in the appropriate hierarchy

Hierarchy of Control Measures

1. Prevent and avoid working at height
2. Implement systems and use work equipment to prevent falls where working at height cannot be avoided (ie, hand rails, scaffolding, brick guards, use of mobile elevated working equipment, use of mobile towers etc)
3. Where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated use work equipment or other measures to minimize the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur such as use of a man safe system, running lines and safety nets.
4. Use the appropriate PPE (hard hats, harnesses, lanyards).

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Working at Height Policy

Your current Health and Safety policy should contain arrangements for safe working at height and outline how this will be managed. Key personnel need to be identified who will deal with any potential working at height issues, training, maintenance of safe working equipment to aid working at height, issue of permits as required and completion of risk assessments. All works need to be managed and supervised and evidence of this consultation recorded wherever possible.

WE OFFER:- Procedures and Arrangements for Your Safe Working at Height

All your arrangements and procedures need to be up to date and relevant to your workplace. We can review and compile working at height arrangements and procedures to ensure that your company is compliant with the Working at Height Regulations 2005 (amended), Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. This is available as a separate service or can be incorporated into your Risk Management Package as part of your policy review.

NRMS also provide working at height awareness and refresher training – please call 01604 651091 for further details.

NRMS UP-DATE: - Mobile Health Screening Now Available



Northants Risk Management Solutions are pleased to announce that they are now able to extent their service of health surveillance for our clients to include mobile health screening at your workplace. We can now offer health screening for:

- Hand and arm vibration
- Skin conditions (occupational dermatitis)
- Lung function (spirometry)
- Hearing conservation (audiometry)
- Stress
- Blood tests (checking for diabetes, cholesterol, lead, alcohol and drugs)
- Blood pressure testing

This screening is very versatile as it can be carried out at your workplace or on site. All screening and “well being” checks are carried out by a registered, highly qualified Occupational Health Nurse (ROH SCPHN RN). Following all private consultations, a confidential report is completed which identifies recommendations and further referrals if deemed appropriate. Our screening is fully compliant with Health and Safety Legislation and the Faculty of Medicine. Our nurses use the most up to date equipment to give accurate results and calibration and electrical checks are completed as part of a maintenance schedule to ensure liability and precision.

We know how important it is to avoid losing valuable working time whilst keeping costs to a minimum and meeting your health and safety obligations. The tests are performed on your premises or site at a time to suit you. All we require from you - is a quiet room.

General well being tests take around 20 minutes per person and you will be given the results for your records. **NRMS** also offer pre and exit employment screening for as little as 1 to 500 employees.

“Well Being” and Stop Smoking workshops are also available. **For further details please call 01604 651091**

TOOL BOX TALK OF THE MONTH: — Hearing Conservation



Noise induced hearing loss is the most common occupational health hazard there is. There is no satisfactory treatment for noise induced hearing loss. **When you're deaf, you stay deaf.**

Hazards

The following are a few examples of processes and equipment used that can be harmful to your hearing:

Compressors	Generators
Breakers	Vibrating rollers
Circular saws	Excavators
Concrete mixers	Workshop machinery
Chainsaws	Taping and hammering

Even if you are not using the noisy piece of equipment, you could be affected by someone using it close by. Look out for noise hazard signs in premises and on site and obey them. It's not only on site that you have to remember your hearing but after work also, noisy clubs, personal i-pods, hi-fis etc.

Controlling Noise

1. Use a less noisy process if possible.
2. If shouting is necessary in order to be heard, the noise level is too high and you should wear ear protectors.
3. Keep compressor covers closed when in use.
4. Ensure breaker mufflers are correctly fitted.
5. Don't keep machinery running unnecessarily.
6. Ensure you don't expose workmates to your noise.
7. Move noise source away from work area or move work area away from noise.
8. If possible, shield noisy processes. Work behind a wall or some other sound absorbing material.

Ear Protection

1. Don't use cotton wool for ear protection, it is not effective.
2. Ensure ear plugs are a good fit and correctly inserted.
3. Regularly clean reusable ear plugs.
4. Use disposable ear plugs once only.
5. Clean your hands before touching all types of ear plugs
6. Ear defenders should fit the head all round the seal.
7. Ensure that ear defenders are worn the correct way round.
8. Ensure defender seals are always in a serviceable condition.
9. Don't alter pressure of ear defenders by bending head band.
10. If you have difficulty in wearing ear defenders, report it.

REMEMBER:- PROTECT YOUR HEARING

Date: _____ Company Name: _____

Site: _____ Completed by: _____

The undersigned have attended:

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MYTH OF THE MONTH:-

Graduates are banned from throwing mortar boards



THE REALITY

Health and safety law doesn't stop graduates having fun and celebrating their success in the time-honoured fashion!

The chance of being injured by a flying mortar board is incredibly small, and when the concern is actually about the hats being returned in good condition, it's time to stop blaming health and safety!

“Don't learn safety by accident”

Call us NOW to arrange your FREE Health and Safety assessment

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