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## Forklift Accident Lands Materials Group SIG with Â£36K Fine

### Description

A Livingston-based construction supply company, SIG Trading Ltd, has been fined Â£36,000 following a severe workplace accident. On 23 August 2011, Livingston Sheriff Court heard about a tragic incident where an employee was twice run over by a forklift truck.

The incident occurred inside the company's warehouse located on Houston Industrial Estate. A forklift driver was transporting a large metal coil. Because the metal coil was elevated, his visibility was significantly reduced. Unbeknownst to him, two other employees were present in the warehouse.

As the driver moved the truck forward a few meters, a colleague's urgent shouts made him aware of a problem. He was instructed to reverse the vehicle immediately. Tragically, he was unaware that he had already struck one of the workers. The impact had knocked the worker to the ground, and the forklift had run over his right leg. Attempting to reverse, the driver unfortunately ran over the same leg once more.

The injured worker faced extensive medical treatment following the accident on 31 March 2010. His injuries required major surgery, which involved the insertion of six pins, two steel plates in his shin, and screws in his ankle and toes. He now lives with a permanent limp, scarring, and constant pain.

SIG Trading Limited shared this warehouse with a subsidiary company. An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) revealed serious safety lapses. There were no measures to segregate pedestrians and vehicles, allowing both companies' vehicles to move freely in the area.

Further findings showed that employees lacked adequate training on transport safety. No refresher courses were provided for the type of forklift truck used, nor were high-visibility garments issued. Such simple precautions could have made a significant difference.

HSE inspector Matthew Ramsey highlighted a concerning statistic: "In 2009/10, more than 1,700 people were injured in workplace transport incidents." He stressed that these incidents are preventable with simple, low-cost measures. The company's failure to conduct a risk assessment and implement a workplace transport plan was a critical oversight. This negligence, combined with inadequate training and poor practices, led to the severe injuries sustained by the employee.

Following the incident, SIG Trading Limited implemented several corrective measures. They introduced barriers, designated walkways, and high-visibility clothing for employees. Training sessions were also conducted. The total cost for these improvements was less than Â£4,500. Unfortunately, these measures were only implemented after the accident, too late to prevent the serious harm done to the injured worker.

On 22 August 2011, at Livingston Sheriff Court, SIG Trading Limited admitted to breaching Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act. The court imposed a fine of Â£36,000 on the company for its failings.

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