
Fruit and Veg Producers Fined Â£320,000 After Devastating Fatal Accident

Description

In a tragic incident that underscores the importance of workplace safety, M.A. Forshaw Limited, a fruit and vegetable production company, was fined Â£320,000 after being found guilty of breaching the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The case, which was heard at Wirral Magistrates' Court on February 1, 2024, involved the death of Francis Schlachter, a 64-year-old employee who suffered fatal head injuries while working at the company's site in Burscough.

Details of the Incident

On January 3, 2020, Francis Schlachter, known as Frank, was performing his routine task of tipping food waste into a skip from a container attached to a forklift truck (FLT) at the site off Marsh Moss Lane. The container, which was known to detach from the FLT during the procedure, slipped, causing Frank to fall from the top of the skip and suffer severe head injuries. Despite immediate medical attention, Frank succumbed to his injuries.

Investigation and Findings

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) conducted a thorough investigation into the incident. The findings revealed several critical lapses on the part of M.A. Forshaw Limited:

- **Risk Assessment:** The company had not fully assessed the risks involved in the daily task of tipping food waste into the skip.
- **Equipment Maintenance:** The equipment used was not maintained in safe working order.
- **Staff Training:** Employees were not properly instructed in safe working practices.

Legal Proceedings

M.A. Forshaw Limited, based at Heatons Bridge Farm, Scarisbrick, West Lancashire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. The court imposed a fine of Â£320,000 and ordered the company to pay Â£4,574 in costs.

Statements from the Parties Involved

- **Linda Schlachter:** Frank's wife of 35 years, Linda, described her husband as a "rock" who always put his family first. She expressed her profound grief and the impact of his loss on their family. "Frank was my rock. He was kind, dependable, and always put his family first. Since his passing, I have had a fair share of trials and tribulations to encounter, and these have been a great challenge without the support of a beloved husband. We have all suffered the loss, and it will be embedded in our bones forever. No man should go to work and never return home after a day of hard work."
- **HSE Inspector Lianne Farrington:** Commenting on the incident, HSE inspector Lianne

Farrington stated, "This wholly avoidable tragic incident led to the death of a much-loved husband, dad, and grandad. It was caused by the failure of the company to implement safe systems of work, properly maintain work equipment, and sufficiently assess the risks involved in routine work processes. If suitable work practices had been in place prior to the incident, Frank's death could have been prevented."

Conclusion

The case of M.A. Forshaw Limited serves as a stark reminder of the critical importance of workplace safety. Employers must ensure that all risks are adequately assessed, equipment is properly maintained, and staff are thoroughly trained in safe working practices. The tragic loss of Francis Schlachter highlights the devastating consequences of neglecting these responsibilities. The substantial fine imposed on M.A. Forshaw Limited reflects the seriousness of the breach and the need for stringent adherence to health and safety regulations to prevent such incidents in the future.

CATEGORY

1. Lancashire

POST TAG

1. Agriculture Sector
2. Francis 'Frank' Schlachter
3. Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA)
4. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
5. Lianne Farrington
6. MA Forshaw
7. Slips Trips and Falls

Category

1. Lancashire

Tags

1. Agriculture Sector
2. Francis 'Frank' Schlachter
3. Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA)
4. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
5. Lianne Farrington
6. MA Forshaw
7. Slips Trips and Falls

Date

06/10/2024

Date Created

26/09/2024