
Tandragee Manufacturer Fined Â£90,000 After Worker's Tragic Death

Description

Taranto Limited, a concrete factory based in Tandragee, has been fined Â£90,000 following the tragic death of a 21-year-old worker.

On August 3, 2021, Matthew Biggerstaff, a young production operative, lost his life while working at Taranto's main production site on Old Scarva Road, Tandragee. The incident occurred during a routine task that involved removing hardened concrete from the interior walls of a truck-mounted mixing drum.

Matthew, along with two colleagues, was assigned to remove the accumulated concrete using an impact hammer. The process required the workers to take turns entering the drum through access hatches located on either side. While Matthew was inside the drum, it unexpectedly rotated, causing him to be ejected from the hatch. He was subsequently drawn under the drum and suffered fatal crush injuries.

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) launched an investigation into the incident. The findings revealed significant safety lapses at the site. Prosecutors from the Public Prosecution Service's (PPS) Fraud & Departmental Section worked closely with HSENI to build a robust case against Taranto Limited. The company pleaded guilty to a single health and safety offence at Newry Crown Court and was fined Â£90,000.

The investigation uncovered that the drum had not been effectively locked off, nor had it been secured to prevent any powered or inadvertent rotational movement. Additionally, the company had failed to conduct a suitable task-specific risk assessment and implement a safe system of work, including the use of appropriate control measures to mitigate the risk.

Justine McIntyre, HSENI Principal Inspector, expressed her condolences and highlighted the preventable nature of the incident. "This tragic and preventable incident resulted in a young man losing his life. Concrete operators must always consider if they can eliminate the need to enter the mixing drum to perform such activities. Where this is not possible, employers must ensure that an adequate and robust risk assessment and safe system of work is in place and that employees involved in the work activity have been suitably trained."

Ms McIntyre further emphasized the importance of safety measures when performing cleaning and maintenance activities within the interior of concrete mixing drums. "Performing cleaning and maintenance activities within the interior of concrete mixing drums presents safety risks which must be controlled. Both the truck and the mixing drum must be adequately locked out. Following lock-out, where there is any residual risk of the drum rotating, adequate measures must be taken to secure the drum and prevent it from moving when any person is inside."

The death of Matthew Biggerstaff has had a profound impact on the local community in Tandragee. Friends, family, and colleagues have been left devastated by the loss of a young life. The incident has

also raised awareness about the importance of workplace safety and the need for stringent safety protocols in industrial settings.

In response to the incident and subsequent fine, Taranto Limited has stated that they are deeply saddened by the loss of Matthew Biggerstaff and have expressed their condolences to his family. The company has committed to reviewing and improving their safety procedures to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future. They have also pledged to work closely with HSENI to ensure compliance with all safety regulations.

This case highlights the critical importance of workplace safety and the responsibilities of employers to protect their employees. It serves as a stark reminder that safety protocols must be rigorously followed and that any lapses can have devastating consequences. The fine imposed on Taranto Limited underscores the legal and financial repercussions that companies can face if they fail to uphold safety standards.

The tragic death of Matthew Biggerstaff is a somber reminder of the potential dangers present in industrial workplaces. It underscores the necessity for stringent safety measures and the importance of employers taking proactive steps to protect their workers. As the community mourns the loss of a young life, it is hoped that this incident will lead to improved safety practices and prevent similar tragedies in the future.

CATEGORY

1. Co Armagh

POST TAG

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5. Workplace Fatality
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Date

06/10/2024

Date Created

30/09/2024