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See www.ipaf.org for full listing

Lack of maintenance costs £265k

Two companies have been fined in relation to an accident in which a telehandler operator died at the Davyhulme Waste Water Treatment Works, Trafford, Greater Manchester, on 18th September 2003.

The deceased man's employer, MB Plastics Ltd of Forward Works, Woolston, Warrington, pleaded guilty to an offence under health and safety legislation and was fined £150,000 plus costs of £24,323.

The principal contractor for the project, Birse Water Ltd, which now trades as Birse Integrated Solutions Ltd of Alexander House, Station Road, Cheadle Hulme, also pleaded guilty and was fined £50,000 plus costs of £41,073.

Damaged window

The court heard that the telehandler's off-side cab window normally acted as a guard, but had been damaged during a lifting operation five weeks before the fatality. At the time of the accident, the cab window was entirely missing.

Judge Peter Lakin said, that although there were no witnesses, the most likely explanation is that the deceased man leant out of the cab window and came into contact with the joystick, bringing the boom of the machine down onto him.

MB Plastics was charged with failing to ensure the safety of employees, under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, while involved in operating and working with, or in the vicinity of, a telehandler. Birse was charged with failing to ensure the safety of people not in its employment, under Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The court found that Birse had failed to ensure that MB Plastics had prepared suitable and sufficient risk assessments in relation to its telescopic forklift truck operations.

Failed to adequately monitor

It also found that Birse had failed to adequately monitor the company and, as a result, had failed to identify the broken window and ensure it was replaced.

HSE Inspector Warren Pennington said: "This incident would have been entirely avoidable if the proper health and safety procedures had been followed.

"MB Plastics did not have a system in place for formal regular inspections of the plant. As a result, the company failed to maintain the cab window which could have saved this man's life. Birse, the principal contractor on the site, also had a duty to supervise its subcontractors properly. The company had a comprehensive management system but it was not implemented and, as a result, something as simple as a missing window was not spotted."

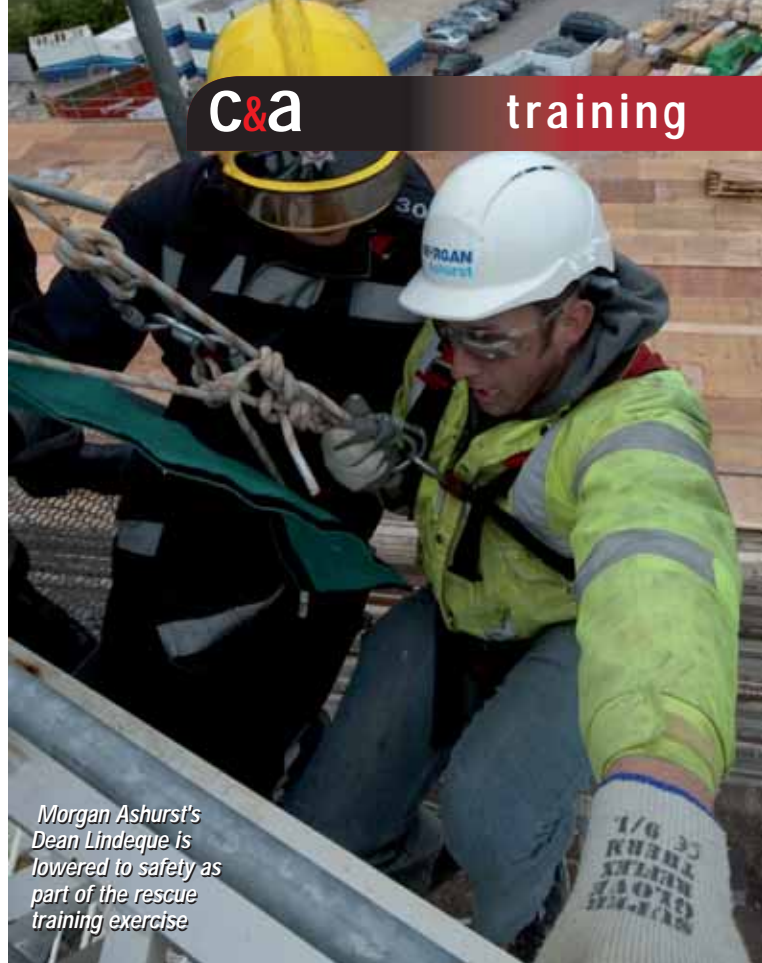
Proper procedures

"This incident emphasises how important it is that companies should not only ensure they have the proper procedures in place - but also ensure they are followed. We're therefore calling on employers to take their responsibilities seriously so that future tragedies can be avoided."

Passing sentence, Judge Lakin said: "MB had primary responsibility for the welfare of its employees. The harsh reality of this case is that, in relation to this contract, MB completely failed to have any proper regard to their health and safety obligations.

Sloppy system of work

This directly led to the development of an unsafe and sloppy system of work in relation to the use of telehandlers. As a result MB's workforce was exposed to completely unnecessary and avoidable risk. Birse, as principal contractors on site, failed to implement their own systems and accordingly failed to properly monitor what MB were doing. This lack of monitoring allowed MB's disregard for health and safety to continue over a number of weeks. In short, Birse failed in their supervisory role."



Morgan Ashurst's Dean Lindeque is lowered to safety as part of the rescue training exercise

Crane rescue training

High drama unfolded at a construction site in Winchester at the end of May when The Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service descended onto the site of a 141 bedroom Holiday Inn, just off the M3 at Junction nine at Morn Hill.

Trained rescuers from Winchester Fire Station's Green Watch scaled the tower crane to simulate a rescue of the operator from the crane's cab, lowering him to the ground with the aid of rope

access equipment and based on him having passed out from a heart attack or other ailment. The rescue was part of a training exercise organised with the support of the site's contractor, Morgan Ashurst.

Dean Lindeque, senior site manager, who was standing in for the crane operator as the 'rescuee', said: "The safety of our entire team is extremely important to us and it was great to work with the fire and rescue service to see how the professionals would come to our aid in an emergency."

Who trained him then?

Spotted on the roof of a building in the UK, this man is installing razor wire. Having used an overly short ladder to clamber onto the roof he hangs over the edge some six to eight metres up - would be interesting to see his method statement!

