Company fined £500k over shovel fatality

A northeast waste management and plant hire company has been fined £500,000 after an employee was hit and killed by a reversing wheeled loader.

George Richardson was killed by a reversing loading shovel.
Newcastle upon Tyne Crown Court heard that, on 15th June 2015, a loading shovel was being operated in the main waste processing shed at Sanders Plant & Waste Management's recycling facility in Morpeth. While the vehicle was loading waste into a trommel and a haulage truck, it struck George Richardson, a 56-year-old site operative, who died at the scene from his injuries.

An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found evidence of a lack of pedestrian and vehicle segregation in the waste shed, meaning that pedestrians and vehicles could not circulate in a safe manner. The company had carried out a risk assessment prior to the incident that identified some control measures to reduce the risks from operating the loading shovel and a fork lift truck on site. However, these control measures had not been fully implemented nor were they sufficient to manage the risk of collision between vehicles and pedestrians. There was also no risk assessment or traffic management plan considering the safe movement of vehicles across the site.

Sanders Plant & Waste Management Limited of Butterwell Drive, Pegswood, Morpeth pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It was fined £500,000 and ordered to pay costs of £14,041.96 costs.

HSE inspector Laura Catterall said after the hearing: *"The HSE investigation found an inadequate assessment of the risks of vehicle movements in the waste shed and a lack of segregation of vehicles and pedestrians. There are more than 5,000 accidents involving transport in the workplace every year, and, like in this case, sadly, some are fatal. A properly implemented transport risk assessment should have identified sufficient measures to segregate people and vehicles and provide safe facilities."*