

Fall from height results in £1.8m fine for manufacturing firm

A food manufacturer has been sentenced after two workers were seriously injured when they fell over four metres through a roof light.

Leeds Magistrates' Court was told how, on 13 April 2016, the two employees of Karro Foods Ltd were investigating a leak from the roof at the Malton site, which the workers did not realise contained several roof lights. The workers were walking closely together and both stood on the same roof light which consequently fell through due to the weight.

One worker suffered four fractured ribs, a punctured lung, and muscular contusions to his outer right thigh. The other suffered a fractured skull, muscular injuries to his right leg and injuries inside his ear which cause ongoing problems with his balance, memory and mental health.

The HSE's investigation found the roof was made of asbestos cement and had several rooflights situated along it but they were not visible due to the build-up of moss and dirt which had accumulated over the years. Employees had also not been made aware of them.

Karro Foods Ltd of Hugden Way, Norton Grove Industrial Estate, Malton, Yorkshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £1,866,000 and ordered to pay costs of £8,019.

After the hearing, HSE inspector Mark Slater commented: *"This was a wholly avoidable incident, caused by the failure of the company to provide adequate controls against the risks arising from working at height."*

"Consideration of roof fragility and rooflights, visible or not, should be made, especially on older buildings."

