

Suez Recycling and Recovery Limited has been fined after a worker suffered a back injury after manually moving gantry steps.

Preston Crown Court was told that on 10 September 2016, an employee helped to manually move steps weighting in excess of 950kg at a site in Duckworth Clough, Haslingden, after repair works had taken place. As a result of this work, the employee sustained a back injury.

The HSE's investigation found manually moving and realigning steps was a regular occurrence and that employees would use a scaffold pole under the steps to move them back into position. Senior staff knew how the steps were moved and that employees had concerns, as it had been reported, yet no suitable assessment had been carried out, or safe system of work implemented, to avoid hazardous handling. No equipment or handling aids had been considered to help employees manoeuvre the gantry steps.

Suez Recycling and Recovery Limited of Grenfell Road, Maidenhead, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety and Work Act 1974 and was fined £144,000 with costs of £32,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Sharon Butler said: *"Incorrect manual handling is one of the most common causes of injury at work. Those in control of work have a responsibility to devise safe methods of working and to provide the necessary equipment, information, instruction and training to their workers. If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incident, the injuries sustained by the employee could have been prevented."*

