

Recycling Company fined after worker crushed to death

A Liverpool recycling company has been sentenced after one of their employees, Paul Andrews, was fatally crushed by falling plastic bales.

Liverpool Crown Court heard how, on 24 May 2017, waste plastic bales had been delivered to Centriforce Products Limited's site at Derby Road, Liverpool and were stacked as free-standing columns in a yard. During the morning, a fork lift truck (FLT) driver noticed one of the columns consisting of bales, stacked three high, had partially collapsed obstructing his path. He subsequently used the fork lift truck to straighten and stabilise the stack before continuing on his way.

Some hours later Paul Andrews was working in the immediate vicinity of the stack when it toppled, with the middle and top bales, weighing over 500 kg, falling and crushing him. The scene of the collapse was not discovered until nearly an hour later when efforts to revive him failed.

Paul is survived by his wife Claire and his two daughters.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Centriforce Products Limited had failed to store waste plastic bales securely in such a way as to prevent the risk of collapse. The company had also failed to carry out a suitable assessment which would have identified risks to the safety of employees located within the danger zone of unstable stacks.

Centriforce Products Limited of Errington Works, Derby Road, Bootle pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and has been fined £120,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,540.95

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Rohan Lye said: *"This appalling incident could so easily have been prevented if Paul's employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, and put a safe system of work in place. Their failure to do so has left Claire without her husband and two daughters without their father."*

"Employers should make sure they properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise the risk from dangerous work activities and prevent future tragedies."