



SUBJECT: Chinese Whispers

RECIPIENTS: All Council Services (including schools)

ISSUE DATE: Sept 2018 REF: HSB 118

Word of mouth training regime led to warehouse worker's death

A logistics management company has been sentenced over the death of an employee who plunged 14 m from his material handling vehicle.

The Employee was working the Distribution's premises when his vehicle was struck by another warehouse operations controller working in the same aisle. The employee's vehicle toppled and they fell, sustaining fatal injuries. The company pleaded guilty to breaching s 2(1) of the Health and Safety and Work Act and was fined £323,000 plus £30,000 costs.



The Crown Court was told there was no electronic or physical system to prevent two vehicles entering the same aisle. Nor did the vehicles have sensors to alert drivers to nearby controllers. The operators' driving positions necessitated them turning 180 degrees to see through the rear window while reversing.

The company had failed to provide adequate training for its operations controllers, which the court considered to be a significant fault and directly causative of the accident because operatives ignored prompts on the computer system used to control vehicles that showed when one was already in an aisle.

The head of public services, which brought the prosecution, said: "While the company had numerous health and safety policies and procedures in place, they had failed to recognise that their operations controllers were being trained by word of mouth rather than through a structured and supervised training process. As a result, a culture had been introduced which allowed a key safety control to be ignored.

After the accident the company, which says it "puts employees' wellbeing at the heart of its culture", installed a new version of the operations software, increased the number of CCTV cameras in the depot to 95, improved lighting on site, reviewed training and improved the visibility of vehicles and their controllers

For details of all LCC's e-learning Health & Safety course please see the [Lincs2Learn webpage](#).

For details of all LCC class room based Health & Safety courses please see the [GEORGE H&S training course](#).

If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:

Corporate Health & Safety Advisers (see George section: Corporate > Information for Working > Risk Management > H&S Advisers)