



SUBJECT: A £1m bang on the head!

RECIPIENTS: All Services – Including Schools

ISSUE DATE: Feb 2017 **REF:** HSB77

Pay nothing until next February! Not in this case, pay a £1m fine NOW!

A well know furniture retailer has been fined after safety failings which led to serious neck and head injuries of a worker. A magistrates' Court heard that in 2015 the worker was unloading wooden furniture frames at one of their upholstery sites, when he was struck by an unsecured furniture arm which fell from an unstable load. The impact knocked him unconscious and he suffered serious neck and head injuries.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found they had failed to adequately manage the risks of heavy loads being moved between manufacturing sites. The court heard the company also failed to supervise the work taking place with a number of near misses being reported from unsecured loads.

The retailer pleaded guilty to breaching sections 3 of the Managing Health and Safety at Work Regulation and also section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined **£1million** and ordered to pay costs of £15,099. Speaking after the case HSE inspector Lyn Spooner said: " The fundamental and systemic failings identified in their health and safety management systems is far from what would be expected from a company of their size who has the ability to deliver higher standards of safety. They were unable to do that on this occasion and a preventable accident was allowed to occur."

In a statement the retailer said: "The health and safety of our employees is extremely important to us.

"The employee who was injured, in 2015, is a valued member of our team; we deeply regret the accident he suffered and we're very glad that he is back at work in his previous role.

"This case has highlighted some areas where, on occasion, our procedures were not as strong as they should have been. Over the last eighteen months we've invested heavily in health and safety including reviewing our health and safety procedures and retraining all our employees. Our skilled craftspeople are critical to our success and we're committed to ensuring their health and safety at work."

Information on safe Manual Handling can be in either [G28 – Manual Handling of Loads](#) or [G12 Moving & Handling of People](#)

Further info can be found on [HSE's webpage](#)

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 Adviser