



Media Release - SafeWork SA

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FINE FOR ANOTHER FORKLIFT INJURY

The dangers of forklifts in the workplace have been highlighted again, following a conviction in the SA Industrial Relations Court.

On Monday, a Gawler fruit and vegetable business was fined a total of \$21,500 for breaches of workplace safety laws, involving the provision of safe systems of work and keeping written statements on safe work procedures.

On 22 February 2006 at Gawler, a 25 year old employee of **She's Apples Service Pty Ltd** had his left leg fractured when caught between a forklift and an industrial waste bin. The forklift had rolled down a slope where it had been parked, due to the brake not being properly secured.

SafeWork SA's investigation revealed that the employee was required to use a forklift, although his employer was aware that he was not qualified to do so. There was no system to ensure that only employees who had been satisfactorily assessed as competent were permitted to operate forklifts.

Further it was found the employer had not conducted a hazard identification and risk assessment, nor provided safe work procedures relating to the use of forklifts.

Industrial Magistrate Michael Ardlie said that forklift injuries can be fatal and although that was not the case in this instance, significant injuries were sustained.

A conviction was recorded, but the fine was discounted by 20% in recognition of the early guilty plea.

This decision follows the death of a woman in hospital recently after she was struck by a forklift at her workplace on 21 January. That incident remains under investigation, but SafeWork SA is again warning that forklifts are a constant source of danger in workplaces.

"Any forklift operator in South Australia must be assessed as competent by a properly qualified assessor," says SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson.

"This helps considerably in ensuring that such equipment is used properly and safely, as a means of reducing the risk of harm in the workplace.

"To further strengthen safety systems, this year will also see the introduction of a national licensing standard which will require all forklift operators in SA to be licensed by SafeWork SA from 1 July," Ms. Patterson says.

For answers and advice on workplace health and safety and the relevant laws, SafeWork SA operates a telephone Help Centre on 1 300 365 255 or 8303 0400. To report serious accidents or incidents, in the workplace call 1 800 777 209