



# News Release - SafeWork SA

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## CRANE COLLAPSE RESULTS IN FINE

**SafeWork SA is warning of the need to consider the safety of the general public in identifying hazards and assessing risks in any workplace.**

In the SA Industrial Relations Court yesterday, a crane operating business was fined after its truck-mounted crane toppled over into a neighbouring property, nearly three years ago, narrowly missing an elderly resident.

**Burf Nominees Pty. Ltd.** trading as **Wyatt Crane Hire** had already pleaded guilty to breaching section 22(2) of the *Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Act 1986*, in failing to avoid adversely affecting the health or safety of another person through an act or omission at work.

The company was fined \$32,000, but this was reduced to \$7,500 after the defendant pleaded financial hardship to the court.

The incident happened on the company's premises at Dry Creek in August 2004.

During maintenance, the boom of the crane was extended and rotated without the vehicle's stabilising outriggers being deployed. As a result, the vehicle rolled off balance with the crane boom smashing into the neighbour's garage after bringing down the electricity service line.

The neighbour, aged 84 at the time, was sitting in his lounge room immediately next to the garage. The falling boom missed him by two metres. He was taken to hospital for shock, and damage to the residence was estimated at \$19,000.

In handing down the penalty, Industrial Magistrate Stephen Lieschke noted that:

- The crane was operated contrary to its written specifications
- There was a failure to undertake any or adequate hazard identification or risk assessment.

*"(The neighbour) was put at significant risk of very serious injury... Additional risk was created to any other person that may have been present on (the) property."*

SafeWork SA says despite the operator's 40 years of experience, there is no substitute for a properly conducted hazard identification and risk assessment process.

"The law also demands the safety of the general public is factored in to any workplace safety check," says the agency's Executive Director, Michele Patterson.

"In this case, a simple referral to the vehicle's operating manual would have indicated that this was a high risk procedure."

"Only luck prevented this from ending in tragedy for all concerned," Ms. Patterson says.