

Worker crushed by dropped/falling object

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A load fell from the top of a double-decked trailer onto a worker, causing life-changing injuries. His employer was prosecuted by the UK HSE and fined.

What happened?

The employee was injured when a piece of metal ducting, six metres long and weighing 28 kg, fell from the top deck of a trailer, hitting him on his head.

The blow caused serious, life changing injuries, including a fractured skull.

What went wrong? What were the causes?

Investigation by the UK HSE found that:

- Whilst the company had developed systems and procedures for unloading of trailers at depots, these had not been implemented at this site.
- Employees were not properly informed about pedestrian and vehicle segregation rules, and little was done about these rules not being followed.

An HSE Inspector said: “*This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply implementing suitable control measures and safe working practices. The company itself had identified and easily implemented the necessary measures after this tragic event.*”

Members may wish to review the following incident:

- Near-miss: Dropped object from cargo

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The effectiveness of the IMCA Safety Flash system depends on the industry sharing information and so avoiding repeat incidents. Incidents are classified according to IOGP's Life Saving Rules.

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IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Line of fire



Safe mechanical lifting



Working at height