



Friday 18 July 2008 23:21

**Health and Safety Executive (Wales)**

### **HSE Warns Firms to Ensure Adequate Preparations after Flintshire Company's Crane Collapses**

Crane companies must ensure they properly plan their work to help prevent crane overturns the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) warned today.

The warning comes after Cheshire Crane Hire Ltd of Nant Road, Connah's Quay, Flintshire was fined £8,000 and ordered to pay full costs of £8,842 at Wirral Magistrates' Court on Wednesday after a 60 tonne mobile crane, which was both overloaded and sited on soft ground, overturned. The incident occurred at the former Champion Spark Plug premises at Arrow Brook Road at Upton, Wirral on 29 March 2007.

HSE Inspector Neil Jamieson, who investigated the incident, said: "The company's managing director Frank Preston had estimated the weight of the tower at about six tonnes, but its actual weight was more than double that figure. He also failed to explain the type of contract to his client, nor did he ask him to sign any papers, which is essential good practice.

"It is essential that for all lifting operations, proper planning - including careful assessment of the ground conditions and appropriate methods of work - should be adopted. It is fortunate in this case that nobody was hurt, but there was the potential for fatalities."

Though parked on a tarmac surface, the crane's outriggers were positioned on soft ground and it overturned whilst attempting to lift a 23 metre long steel chimney stack from the outside wall of a brick clad machinery room that was about to be refurbished. The stack fell next to the boom of the crane. Nobody was injured, but the crane's cab crushed an adjacent electricity sub station and in subsequent days the crane's diesel and hydraulic tanks leaked out, contaminating a local brook.

Cheshire Crane Ltd pleaded guilty to a breach of Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HSWA) in that it failed to ensure the safety of it

Notes to editors:

1. Section 2(1) of the HSWA states that:

"It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees."

2. Information and advice on construction safety can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm>

Issued on behalf of HSE by COI News and PR North West.

Client ref 18 July 2008

COI ref 163689P