

Child killed by reversing forklift truck

Summary

An eight-year old child was killed under the wheels of a reversing forklift truck. The child was staying at his grandparents during the school holidays, where he was given rides around the farm. It is not known exactly what happened but it is believed the child either fell from the FLT whilst it was reversing or ran towards the reversing vehicle and was run over.

Action

The director of a farming partnership was prosecuted under section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The partner pleaded guilty to the charge and was fined £17,500 and ordered to pay £2,779 towards the cost of bringing the prosecution.

Advice

Transport – struck by a moving vehicle, being trapped by something collapsing, overturning vehicles and machinery are the most common cause of accidents to children. The prevention of Accidents to Children Regulations prohibits the carrying of any child under 13 years in the cab of any agricultural vehicle.

If you wish to carry passengers including children over 13 years on vehicles then provisions must be made to allow them to be carried safely. For example, trailers used to carry passengers should be fitted with guardrails and secure seating arrangements made to reduce the risks of persons falling from vehicles in motion.

Vehicle routes and movements need to be planned to separate them from pedestrians. Ideally, areas where vehicles manoeuvre should be kept pedestrian free. Putting children at risk by encouraging them to be near farm vehicles leads to injury – possibly fatal – as shown in this case.

Remember children often think that because they can see the driver the driver can see them. Farmers can and must do more to protect children from the real dangers on farms.