

Siemens plc says lessons learned and acted upon following death of contractor

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Siemens PLC say “lessons have been learned and acted upon and the company remains committed to a culture of zero harm” following the death of a self-employed contractor at its Train Care Facility in west London in June 2017.

The company was fined £1.4 million after pleading guilty to an offence under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which followed an investigation and prosecution by industry regulator the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

Ian Parker was killed when a 650kg traction motor he was preparing for removal from an electric locomotive fell on him causing fatal injuries. The ORR says it was found that the accident was caused or contributed to by the failure to implement a safe system of work for the task being undertaken.

A statement from Siemens PLC said: “Our thoughts are first and foremost with the family and friends of Ian Parker, as has been the case since the tragedy in June 2017. We are deeply saddened by the events that transpired and would like to reiterate our genuine and sincere apologies to the family of Ian for the loss and suffering that they have had to endure.

"Ian's death had a significant impact on our business – and our people, who were shocked and saddened by the loss of a colleague and friend.

"Following the tragic incident, the Leadership Team made a commitment to drive forward a number of health and safety initiatives in order to reduce the likelihood of a similar event in the future.

"In the year following the incident, the business accelerated work that was already under way, promoting a new approach in the core areas of health and safety management.

"Today, the company accepts this penalty and its role in Ian Parker's death. Lessons have been learned and acted upon and Siemens remains committed to a culture of zero harm and the highest standards of health and safety for all its employees, contractors and sub-contractors."

An investigation by ORR revealed defects in task planning, which included the failure to carry out an appropriate task specific risk assessment and a lack of clear allocation of responsibility for supervision of the task.

Sentence was passed by Her Honour Judge Dhir KC at the Central Criminal Court London on Tuesday 7 February 2022, following ORR's prosecution.

In her remarks, Judge Dhir KC said that this was an accident which the defendant ought to have prevented. In explaining the size of the fine, she added: "It must be sufficient to bring home the message to management and shareholders the need to comply with the regulations."

Ian Prosser, Chief Inspector of Railways, said: "Our thoughts remain with the friends and family of the deceased.

"A catalogue of basic errors resulted in this tragedy. ORR's thorough investigation highlighted that it is imperative any work undertaken for Britain's rail network requires a safety risk assessment appropriate to the task and involves staff, who are fully trained, to carry out that task under constant supervision.

"We hope Siemens have learnt from this and avoid a repeat of this terrible event."

Photo credit: ORR