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COMCARE SECURES INCREASED FORKLIFT SAFETY AT LINFOX

National transport carrier Linfox will continue to make important safety improvements at its Welshpool container yard after a successful prosecution by Comcare following the injury of a forklift driver in 2007.

The Federal Court judgment highlighted by Comcare today declared that Linfox had contravened federal work safety laws by failing to provide and maintain a safe work environment and adequate supervision and training for the driver.

The driver suffered severe crush injuries on 19 December 2007 when his forklift overturned after the container being carried hit a stationary pile of containers.

The Comcare investigation found the width of the passage between the containers was inadequate, and the container was being transported at an unsafe height of about eight metres.

Comcare Work Health and Safety General Manager Neil Quarmby said that all employers needed to ensure proper safety systems were in place at all times to protect workers.

“No driver should turn the ignition key of a forklift unless they are trained in how to use the machine, and the work area around them is safe.”

“This court decision supports Comcare’s view that forklifts are a major source of risk of injury and federal employers should therefore take particular care that forklifts are used safely, in a safe environment.”

Mr Quarmby said the decision would add momentum to a current national campaign to improve forklift safety.

The national campaign is a result of collaboration and co-operation between members of the Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities, of which Comcare is a member.

Mr Quarmby said Linfox had worked with Comcare to improve systems after the safety incident, and had proceeded to court on the basis of agreed submissions.

The court ordered Linfox to pay a civil penalty of \$150,000 for the contravention of federal work safety laws and to pay Comcare’s legal costs. Linfox further agreed to pay the investigation costs of \$10,000.

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