

## Company fined after nine tonne truck hoist crushes mechanic

18 April 2016

Agricultural contracting company, John Austin Limited, has been fined \$36,750 and ordered to pay reparations of \$65,554 after a mechanic was crushed by a nine tonne truck hoist, leaving him with two severe breaks to his pelvis, deep bruising and nerve damage. It is unlikely he will regain full use of one leg and he spent several months in hospital recovering from his injuries. He also suffered from post-traumatic stress.

John Austin Limited pleaded guilty and was sentenced in the Te Awamutu District Court today under the Health and Safety in Employment Act.

The company has a fleet of 80 heavy vehicles, some of which have hydraulic hoists. On 18 February 2015, the mechanic and another employee of John Austin Limited were fixing a truck at a farm in Morrinsville when they were asked to look at another of the company's trucks with a broken hoist loaded with maize. Once they thought the problem was fixed, the truck was reversed onto a stack of maize and the hoist was lifted to dump its load. Halfway up, the hoist stopped.

Needing to get under the hoist to look at the hydraulic valves and hoses in the chassis, the mechanic wedged a railway sleeper into a hinge of the hoist. While he was under the hoist, a valve burst. The hoist came crashing down, crushing the wedged wood. As he couldn't get out in time, the mechanic was hit by the hoist on the hip and between his ribcage and pelvis.

"An inadequately secured raised truck hoist is a significant hazard," says WorkSafe Chief Inspector, Keith Stewart. "John Austin Limited should have had procedures in place for employees when they worked on a raised truck hoist and those steps should have been properly communicated. The employee should also have had training on repairing truck hydraulic systems so he knew how to work on them safely."