

## Quarry operator ordered to pay over \$150K after employee crushed to death

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A South Canterbury-based quarry and transport operator has been ordered to pay reparations of \$100,000 to the family of an employee who was crushed to death while working at its Gordon Valley limestone quarry.

Transport (Waimate) Limited pleaded guilty to two charges under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 for failing to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of Scott Baldwin and failing to ensure that Mr Baldwin held a current certificate of competence as a quarry manager.

The company was also fined \$54,000 at the sentencing in Timaru District Court yesterday.

On March 19 2015, Mr Baldwin, the quarry manager and sole regular employee on the quarry site, began work at the Gordon Valley quarry. He started two diesel motors at the plant used for processing limestone – one for the hammer mill and the other for the ancillary equipment – both located in an open store shed.

At approximately 7pm that evening, a person from a neighbouring property heard the motors at the site running at a high pitch and not under load. Upon investigating the noise, the neighbour entered the quarry shed and found Mr Baldwin's severely injured body lying underneath rotating machinery.

A WorkSafe New Zealand investigation found that the company failed to identify and manage the clear hazard posed by the quarry machinery. There were no processes in place to stop maintenance on machinery being carried out while the machinery was running, and there were no effective controls for an operator to stop the top motor in an emergency.

Also the fact the company never ensured that Mr Baldwin held an appropriate qualification to manage the quarry was a significant failure.

WorkSafe Chief Inspector Keith Stewart says there were a number of steps that Transport (Waimate) could have taken to prevent such an incident occurring, including installing fixed guarding to make sure people could not reach into dangerous parts of machinery at all times, conducting regular audits for hazard identification, and making sure that Mr Baldwin was not left to work alone and unsupervised.

Mr Stewart says Mr Baldwin's death is a reminder of the horrific things that can happen when adequate safety measures are not in place.

"Large machinery used on quarries poses an inherent danger to anyone that comes into close contact with it. Transport (Waimate) failed to protect its employee, and tragically, in this instance, Mr Baldwin has had to pay the ultimate price for the company's failings," Keith Stewart says.