

SAFETY ALERT

REMOVING THE SAFETY PIN ON EXCAVATOR LEFT YOUNG WESTERN AUSTRALIAN WORKER PARALYSED

A WA-based demolition company and two directors have been fined a total of \$40,000 after a young worker was left paralysed when one of the directors altered an excavator to make it easier and quicker to change attachments.

Perth Magistrates Court heard the 18-year-old worker was not paralysed from the “mid-chest down” as a result of the actions of one of the directors.

The court heard the excavator was fitted with a ‘quick hitch’ that allowed attachments to be secured to the boom. The quick hitch included a safety pin secured by a short chain, which was designed to ensure attachments didn’t fall off. However, a director cut the pin off the quick hitch to make it quicker to change the attachments.

When the bucket of the excavator was swung round it detached and flew through the air. It struck the 18-year-old worker in the upper back, severing his spinal cord.

Murphy Demolition was fined \$30,000 for failing to provide a safe workplace. Company directors Patrick and Daniel Murphy were each convicted and fined \$5,000 over the incident. They were unavailable for comment at press time.

WA WorkSafe Commissioner, Nina Lyhne, said the case was a “tragic reminder that these types of safety devices were there for a reason and should not be removed from machinery under any circumstances”.

**News from CFMEU – Construction & General Division
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