



WARD BROS.

TRANSPORT AND DISTRIBUTION

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Ms Clare Baily
Senior Coroner
The Coroner's Office
Middlesbrough Town Hall
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09 April 2025

Regulation 28 Report - Action to Prevent Future Deaths – Gary James

Ward Bros (Malton) Limited make this response to the Future Deaths Report issued by the Senior Coroner for Teesside and Hartlepool following the Inquest into the tragic death of Gary Lee James which occurred as a result of an accident at work on 08 January 2019.

Mr James was an employee of Ward Brothers (Malton) Limited. At the time he was engaged in the process of removing metal racking affixed to the ceiling of shipping containers, a process known as devanning. Ward Bros commenced the devanning programme on 19 December 2019. Devanning containers was not a process that Ward Bros had been involved with prior to 19 December 2019. Ward Bros are primarily an operator of goods vehicles, alongside operating a maintenance workshop and a warehousing facility.

The devanning process was to be undertaken on a relatively small scale. Ward Bros had in place risk assessments and systems of work for other activities the business was engaged in. However, there was no written risk assessment or written safe system of work for the devanning process. This was due to devanning not being something Ward Bros had experience of. A system was developed through experience. Ward Bros accept that a risk assessment should have been carried out and a safe system of work developed in advance of employees undertaking the devanning exercise.

No further devanning has been undertaken by Ward Bros since the accident involving Gary James and we have no plans to become engaged in the process again in the future. For this reason, there is no risk of future deaths occurring at Ward Bros as a result of employees, or anyone else, devanning shipping containers.

On the wider subject of Ward Bros general health and safety procedures, risk assessments and safe systems of work were in place for all other activities. These had been drafted with the assistance of third parties with the appropriate expertise. Following the accident involving Mr James, Ward Bros conducted a full review of the existing health and safety procedures, in conjunction with third party experts. This resulted in improved risk assessments and systems of work which are reviewed on an annual basis. A training programme is in place which ensures employees receive regular training on the safe systems of work and updates are provided by way of toolbox talks and safety notices.



WARD BROS are a member of Palletways (UK) Ltd
Company Number: 4068959
VAT No: 500 6885 58
Please visit www.wardbrosmalton.co.uk

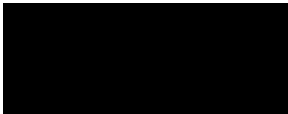


Registered Office: WARD BROS (Malton) Ltd
Dormor Way, South Bank, Middlesbrough, TS6 6XH
Depots at:- Malton, Immingham
Directors: S.J. Ward, C.W. Sharpe, R.G.G. Bowes

A third party consultancy is retained by Ward Bros who understands the business and the activities it engages in. The consultancy provides us with updates where developments occur that are relevant to the activities we engage in. Ward Bros then provide its employees with the relevant information.

Ward Bros believe that action was taken by the business following the accident on 08 January 2019 which addresses the matters raised in the future deaths report by (1) ceasing the devanning operation with immediate effect and (2) undertaking a full review of health and safety procedures and implementing improved risk assessments and systems of work for all activities undertaken. Any future activities that Ward Bros may become engaged in will be risk assessed and a safe method of work created, with the assistance of experts, before the task is commenced.

Yours sincerely



Director



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