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Ports of Auckland fined over worker death

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Ports of Auckland

The Ports of Auckland have been given a fine after admitting it was responsible for the death of a worker who was killed by a falling container.

Pala'amo Kalati, a former stevedore at the Ports of Auckland, died back in August 2020 on a ship at the Fergusson Container Terminal.

The port was then charged and pleaded guilty to two charges under the Health and Safety at Work Act. They were fined by the Auckland District Court NZ$561,000 ($345,800) and got an order to pay NZ$20,000 ($12,330) in reparation to another worker who was injured in the incident and NZ$90,000 ($55,500) in costs to Maritime New Zealand. Ports of Auckland also made a voluntary payment of reparation to the Kalati family.

Then chief executive of the port Tony Gibson was also facing charges related to the worker's death. The case was due to be heard in the courts in 2024.

It is worth noting that changes had been made to processes which lessened the oversight during the pandemic while undertaking work which resulted in the fatal incident. Kalati and a colleague were working on board as lashers discharging containers from the Constantinos P.A. crane that was operating next to the two men.

While lifting two containers off the vessel it accidentally lifted a third container which detached and fell killing Kalati.

A spokesperson for Ports of Auckland told local media that they accepted the charges and have taken significant steps to improve safety in the three years since the incident.